GOD's CALL TO ENGLAND,

U*8.81

For Thankfulneſs after gracious

DELIVERANCES:

Wherein is ſhewed,

That our DELIVERANCES,

Not anſwered with *Reformation*,

Will be followed with *Soreſt Deſtruction.*

By *Thomas Gouge.*

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JOSH. 20.

If ye forſake the Lord---he will turn and do you hurt, after the good he hath done you.

Gratiarum ceſſat diſcurſus, ubi recurſus non fuerit. Nec modo nil augetur ingrato, ſed & quod accipit vertitur ei in perniciem. Bern. Serm. 1. cap. Jejunii.

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06, 53

A PREFACE,

Preſſing to the great Duty of Thankfulneſs for Mercies.

THE *eminent Appearances of a* Divine Hand *delivering this ſinful Nation in its* plunges *of woful Diſtreſſes, have been ſuch* remarkable Teſtimonies *of Infinite Goodneſs and Patience, as are ſcarce to be parallel'd in any* Age *of the World, in any* Nation *under Heaven. So numerous are the Expreſſions of Mercy to a People daring Heaven with their Impieties, that whoever*

ſhall review the Catalogue *of them, will be amazed to ſee one more* ſuperadded *to the former ſo abuſed and ſlighted, as wickedly they have been by many of us.* Yet Prerogative Mercy, *which acts beyond expectation and deſert, conquering all Difficulties and Diſcouragements, hath not* ſtept aſide *to give way to* Juſtice, *but hath continued its progreſs towards us: Had it not been for this, we had certainly ſeen more direful* Effects *of our Enemies* Projects, *than yet we have beheld. Had it not been for this, we had been as deeply involv'd in* Miſery, *as we are in* Sin. *Hence in our great extremity, after all his* forgotten favours, *he hath ſpoken in his Love, as in Jerem.* 16. 21. I will this once cauſe them to know, I will cauſe them to know mine hand and my might, and they ſhall know my Name is the Lord. This once *will I cauſe them to* know my Mercy, *to underſtand*

my

my unwillingneſs to deſtroy them: and hence it is, that England has not been forſaken of the Lord, although it is full of ſin againſt the Holy One of Iſrael, *Jer.* 51. 5.

Now what hath encouraged, what hath induced the Lord to expreſs thus much favour to ſuch, as ſo provoke the eyes of his Glory? *It is only becauſe* He will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, *Rom.* 9. *Be it known, O People of* England, *'tis* not for your Righteouſneſs *that the Lord hath done this*, for ye are a ſtiff-necked People, *Deut.* 9. 6. *Our works and ways deſerve nothing but utter ruine, and perpetual deſolation. For his Names ſake has he done all this, and* that he might make his mighty Power to be known, *Pſal.* 106. 8. *his* ſuper-tranſcendent *Goodneſs hath wrought out theſe* ſweet Deliverances *for us. And for this end hath he done it, that we* might

remember our evil ways, and our doings that were not good, and might loath our ſelves in our own ſight, for our iniquities and abominations, *Ezech.* 36. 31. *And now ſhall we be a happy People, if Mercies ſhall ſo prevail upon us, as to effect this bleſſed frame and diſpoſition in us. For this end hath the Almighty tryed us with another Deliverance, becauſe he hath ſaid*, It may be they will preſent every one their Supplications, and return from their evil ways, *Jer.* 36. 7.

Oh, what expectations hath God to ſee a repenting, reforming, holy, obedient carriage, upon our receipts of ſuch wonderful favours *from him! He looks that we will* appear *another manner of People than we have been, after theſe eminent, frequent, ſeaſonable, and* Miraculous appearances *for us. Oh therefore, ſince the Lord hath not forſaken us a ſinful People, but*

ſtood

ſtood by us, and redeemed us, when appointed to Death, Let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant that ſhall never be forgotten, *Jerem.* 50. 5. *Let us offer up our ſelves to the Lord as* a whole-burnt-offering, *in the aſcending* flames *of pureſt* Affections. *Let us not occaſion the ceſſation of Heavenly Kindneſſes, by a wicked regardleſneſs of them. Let it be our employment, to* applaud *and* improve *the Infinite Love of God in all his Mercies.*

Come, let us view the ſudden and ſweet Diſpenſations of God's heavenly and holy Providence, and fix our thoughts on his ſurprizing Benefits, *till our hearts are* enamour'd *with the Authour of them, and* transform'd *into the likeneſs of that loving God that gives them: let us* trace *him in his* ways of Mercy, *till we are ſweetly brought into* the ways of Duty: *Let our Souls be drawn up to the* Center of Heaven,

by the Golden Chains *of Mercies let down from thence unto us. Let us continue a* leiſurely *Meditation on our gracious Deliverances, till our Affections are* ſublimated, *our hearts inflamed, and* a Thankful frame *produced. Let us behold our moſt precious Lives preſerved, our* ineſtimable Liberties *ſecured, the conſpicuous and glorious Light of the Goſpel continued, the Life of his* Sacred Majeſty *defended: I ſay, let us contemplate theſe things, till our health ſhall ſound* Melodious Praiſes *to that Almighty Power that hath done all this.*

Now, Courteous Reader, *what doth the Lord require for all this Kindneſs, but* a truely thankful Heart *and Life? And what leſs canſt thou give to God than this? Thou canſt preſent the Almighty with no ſuch pleaſing Offering, as a grateful Heart: For God hath ſufficiently expreſt his* eſteem *of ſuch Preſents, by appointing the* Al-

Altar of Incenſe, *which was for Thank-Offerings, to be encompaſſed with* a Crown *of pureſt Gold: for though the moſt* odoriferous Incenſe *is nothing in his account, the thank-ful heart that preſents it as* a Teſtimonial *of unfeigned Gratitude, is highly eſteemed by him. Neither is there any thing more conſonant to the Dictates of Reaſon, than that we expreſs all manner of kindneſs to thoſe that oblige us by their large* Munificence: *for,* Quiſquis magna dedit, voluit ſibi magna rependi.

The Donors of great favours, expect anſwerable requitals. And however we may forget what we give, we muſt not forget what we receive: And therefore I may ſay as Bernard, Cùm amat Deus, nil aliud vult quam amari; when the Lord expreſſeth love, he deſignes to be loved. *And verily, a grateful reflexion of honour to God is* ἐν θεολογίᾳ πολλὰ καὶ ἐλαχίστη, our higheſt and

loweſt Divinity, *the higheſt pitch of* attainments, *is but Love; the* loweſt return *can be nothing beneath it, if any thing at all. The only* Ἀντιδωρα, *or* Requitals *we can render to God for his richeſt Favours, are only Teſtimonials of* Thankfulneſs, *by extolling his holy Name with unfeigned* Praiſes, *and reflecting Honour on his* bleſſed Majeſty *by* chearful Obedience *to his ſacred Commandments. Now therefore as the piercing Rays of the glorious Sun, though paſſing through the* transfluent Air *with an imperceptible motion, yet meeting with a Solid Body* rebound *with an* increaſing luſtre; *ſo ſhould our* Hearts and Lives *reflect the honour of all our Mercies on our Heavenly Benefactor. And unleſs the* Bounty *of Heaven gains ſo far upon our obſtinate Hearts, as to effect this work, we ſhall gain little by the greateſt Mercies: the ſenſe of which cauſed a holy man to*

pray,

pray, Domine, da Gratitudinem cum Miſericordiâ; nolo Miſericordiam ſine Gratitudine. Oh Lord, give me a thankful heart with thy Mercies; Lord, I deſire not Mercies without a grateful heart to improve them. *And we ſhall finde it true, that Mercy unregarded, Deliverance not improved, will render our condition more deſperate and dangerous, and our end more miſerable. But, Oh! How much is it to be lamented, that a* Vertue *ſo applauded for* ſurpaſſing excellency, *a* Duty *enjoyned with ſuch* indiſpenſable Neceſſity, *is ſo much unſeen in all, and unpractiſed by moſt! How are the* Mites *of Mens Bounty more regarded than the* Mountains *of Gods Mercy! Of the Ten* Lepers *that our* Saviour *healed, but* one returned to glorifie God, *Luke* 17. 17, 18. *How few of a* whole Nation *delivered from the* barbarous hands *of bloody-minded men, from the* com-

complicated Contrivances *of* Romiſh *Agents, have returned deſerved Praiſes to our bleſt Redeemer? How are both* private *and* publick *Mercies buried in* the Grave of Unthankfulneſs? *which is the reaſon of that* Unprofitableneſs *which lays us under the greateſt Curſe.*

Yet an Ungrateful temper is extremely odious in the thoughts of all men. It receives a black doom even from ſuch as may juſtly be condemned for it. Ingratitude *is that ſin which* Lycurgus *a Heathen-Lawgiver accounted ſo* prodigious, *inhumane, and abominable, that he thought it was ſo impoſſible for reaſonable men to be* guilty of it, *that it would be ſuperfluous to enact a Law* to condemn it: *And 'tis reported of the* Egyptians, *that thoſe among them that wanted* Humanity *to return Kindneſs to Benefactors, underwent no leſſer Penalty than to be diſabled from having* a Poſterity *to ſurvive them,*

that

that the world might not be peſter'd with an ungrateful Progeny. *But if the contempt of humane kindneſſes gives ſuch offence to mortal men, and receives ſuch Puniſhments; What puniſhment doth it merit, what hatred doth it deſerve, when the* guilt is infinitely raiſed, *by the conſideration of that* infinite Glory *that is affronted by it! The* juſt Threats *of the Eternal God againſt ſuch Offenders, expreſs its provoking nature, Deut.* 8. 19. If ye at all forget the Lord, ---I teſtifie againſt you, ye ſhall ſurely periſh. *If ſuch Severity be to thoſe that* at all *forget, what will be the portion of ſuch as* altogether *forget the Mercies of God? But oh! which of us hath not ſuffered Divine Favours to ſlip out of our minds? What* leſs *in our thoughts than* how much *God hath done for us? Will not Vengeance fall upon us* with a witneſs, *if we proceed in ſuch ungrateful courſes?*

Now

Now therefore, to uſe the words of Jude, I will put you in remembrance, how that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the Land of *Egypt*, afterwards deſtroyed them that believed not, *Jude* 5. *Such will be the portion of all thoſe, we may fear, who will neither love nor obey the Lord, after all the great things He hath done for us: but accounting them ſmall things, deny thoſe reſpects they ought to ſhew to him that did them*, Who is wiſe in Counſel, and excellent in working. *But ſhall we be worſe than the Ox or Aſs, that know their Maſters, and ſerve them? Shall we be more ungrateful to God than we are to Men? The People of* Iſrael *told* Gideon, *Judg.* 8. 22. Thou ſhalt rule over us, ſeeing thou haſt delivered us from the hands of the *Midianites. Shall we not ſay to God, O Lord, ſince in thy infinite Mercy thou haſt delivered us from*

the hands of our enemies, we will now ſubmit unto thee, and thou ſhalt rule over us? Oh how pleaſing would this be to God? How happy ſhould we be under ſuch acknowledgments of God's Deliverances? But to perſiſt in ſin is very unreaſonable: Mic. 6. 3. Oh my people, teſtifie againſt me: What have I done to thee? --- *verſ.* 4. I brought thee up out of the land of *Egypt*, and redeemed thee out of the houſe of ſervants, *&c. Oh, my people, ſays God, remember what great Deliverances I have wrought, what Miracles my arm hath performed for you; and will ye ſin after all this? Oh* England! *Remember what God hath done, what Deliverance from* a heatheniſh condition, *what an eſcape from* Popiſh darkneſs, *what Redemptions from* Romiſh Conſpiracies, *God hath beſtowed; and then let Conſcience ſpeak, whether you do well or no*

to

to ſin againſt ſuch a God as this. This will never be tolerated long by a Holy God. This will make him ſay, as Ezek. 21. 3. Behold, I am againſt thee, and will draw forth my ſword out of its ſheath, and will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked. *The Sword of Juſtice ſheathed by Divine Patience, will be drawn out to avenge the abuſe of Mercies. Will not contempt of Goodneſs bring the fulfilling of that Threat upon us, Ezek.* 44. 25. I will not watch over you for good, but for harm? *Providence hath hitherto been watchful over us to ſecure us from ruine; but miſerable ſhall we be, when God ſhall watch opportunities to ruine and deſtroy us.*

Now I muſt tell you, whatever our apprehenſions of things may be, there is nothing will prevent our deſtruction after Deliverance, but a ſerious Repentance, *and* hearty Reformation. *'Tis not our*

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Policy *or* Power, *'tis not our* Courage *or* Undauntedneſs *can poſſibly ſecure us*; but except we repent, we ſhall ſurely periſh. *Our* Profeſſion *and* Priviledges *are inſufficient to give us ſafety.* Jeruſalem, *the* holy City, *is now a ruinated heap:* a place of ſtrength, ſo that the Kings of the earth and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed that the enemy and adverſary ſhould enter its gates, *Lam.* 4. 12. *and yet it is made* a perpetual deſolation *by the fire of God's wrath kindled againſt it.*

Neither may the Greateſt *in our Land, if living in ſin, think to eſcape by or in wickedneſs.* The hand of God will finde out his enemy, *though never ſo potent, though guarded with all humane ſecurities. And certainly, if God ſhall at laſt for our ſins ſuffer our enemies to prevail,* Prince *and* Peaſant *ſhall ſuffer alike*; Royal,

as

as baſe blood, will be a Drink-offering. *And if in* Policy *they ſpare a while, yet in* Cruelty *they will ſlay at laſt. The* dainty Diſh *is reſerv'd for laſt. The beſt blood and the beſt wine are brought forth at laſt; the* courſer blood *runs out before that pure blood that flows from the heart is drawn forth. Let none therefore flatter themſelves in ſin, becauſe exalted to eminent degrees of Honour in a ſinful Land.*

But if in ſincerity we turn from our ſins, the Lord ſhall be our Security, *and* appoint Salvation for Walls and Bulwarks. *This ſhall be a* ſign, *we ſhall ſtill eſcape when we ſhall be mourning for, and leaving off thoſe ſins, that have brought us into danger. Ezra 7. 16.* Thoſe that have eſcaped ſhall eſcape, for they ſhall be on the Mountains as Doves in the Valleys, mourning every one for their own Iniquity. *Were there*

ſuch

ſuch an univerſal *Mourning for* our particular *ſins, we ſhould ſoon ſee Providence ſcattering the threatning Clouds that hang over our heads, and raiſing a foundation for our further* hopes *of eſcape. Oh then that Charity to* a ruining State, *that* Compaſſion *to the languiſhing Church of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that our* Gratitude *to a gracious God for his Mercies, or that our dread of a* confounding Majeſty, *and haſtening Miſery, may make us break off ſin! God calls, as Jer.* 14. 17. I have ſeen thy abominations; Wo unto thee, oh *Jeruſalem*, wilt thou not be made clean? when ſhall it once be? *Oh when ſhall we leave our ſins*, after *ſo many years of* Patience-tiring, *Juſtice-daring Provocations? When* ſhall it once be, after *ſo many* leſſer Judgments *ſounding warnings to us to prevent our ruine? Oh when ſhall it be, after all* the miraculous engaging

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Deliverances *God hath given? Oh let this be the time.*

Now to this end I have presented thee with those Considerations, that may be Inducements to all, to learn to live more holily, after such rich enjoyments of Mercies; and prevent the abusing of them to sin. For as Hermes *after Wine was wont to take a grain of* Mastick, *to prevent its* Coagulation *into destructive* Tartar; *so should we wisely fortifie our selves by weighty Considerations, so to prevent those sins we are naturally prone to commit after the receipt of Mercies. And especially, because when* Satan *by his Instruments hath attempted our destruction, and our gracious God hath* prevented *their designs by delivering, not* suffering the gates of Hell to prevail against us; *our* vigilant Adversary, *seeing he cannot* destroy *us, will exercise all his wylès to* deprive *us of the* benefit of Deliverances *given to*

us, by endeavouring to divert *our minde from conſidering them, and* enticing *us to a wrong Improvement of them. Let us alſo believe our future condition is like to be according to our carriage under Gods preſent gracious Diſpenſations. And I may ſay of* Mercy, *as the* Heathens *of* Fortune, Nec cultores præterit, nec hæret contemptoribus. It ſlights not its Worſhippers, neither will it ſtay with its Contemners. *So thoſe that are grateful for Mercies ſhall never want them, thoſe that are abuſers ſhall not long enjoy them. Continuance in ſin will be ſo great diſcouragement to God in ways of Mercies, that we ſhall have juſt Cauſe to deſpair of future relief from him. 'Tis reported of* Alphonſus *King of* Spain, *that a* Noble *beggered by his wickedneſs, ſeeking relief, was denied, with this Anſwer,* If thou hadſt ſpent thy eſtate in my Service,

there

there were reaſon to provide for thee; but ſince you have fooliſhly waſted it, thou ſhalt live in thy wants without my relief. *So although God will deliver thoſe whoſe dangers ariſe from ſerving of him, yet he may juſtly deny deliverance to thoſe that involve themſelves in miſeries by ſinning againſt him.*

Now, Reader, *if thou wondereſt ſo important a Subject as this, is undertaken by ſo weak a hand as mine; know, that* gratitude *raiſeth the price of the meaneſt preſent. And this is certain, God doth not chooſe means becauſe* effectual, *but means are effectual, becauſe God chooſes them. Young* Samuel *was choſen to carry a meſſage to* old Eli, *who did not contemn him for his youth, but received the meſſage the Lord ſent by him. And although I am the meaneſt of Saints, my weak endeavours may be proſperous with the bleſſing of an Almighty God.*

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There is ſuch a pruritus ſcribendi *in this* diſeaſed Age, *that would force me to make ſome* plea *for expoſing this* ſmall Treatiſe *to publick view. But* Apologies *commence ſo low, that they are rather believed to be* flatteries *than* truths; *and (as one ſaith)* ſhould the higheſt Proteſtations of my humble intentions be entered, I know men will take the liberty to believe or queſtion at pleaſure. *Therefore all I ſhall ſay is onely this; The ſubject and Treatiſe is* peaceable, *not mingling with the intemperate and preternatural heats of the Chriſtian, or rather unchriſtian* Gladiatours *of theſe days. The Treatiſe is alſo* practical, *deſigned to reduce the lives of perſons to better order; and not ſtuffed with nice ſpeculations, to gratifie mens itching ears and wild fancies. I believe alſo you will ſay 'tis* plain, *if not too uncouth. But I ſhall not affect the* vain Pedantry *of plauſible*

ble oſtentation; for I reckon the ſimplicity *of ſober, well-meaning hearts, need no ſuch curious* embelliſhments: *And I ſhall be willing to be judged by any, whether it be not* ſeaſonable; *and ſo I ſhall depend upon the Lord to accompany it with his bleſſing to the Souls of thoſe who ſhall vouchſafe to peruſe it; whoſe Prayers I ſhall deſire, that I may ſpend my days to the glory of God, and in promoting the publick welfare; and ſo remain,*

Chelmsford, Octob. 8. 79.

An unfeigned Well-wiſher to the publick good,

THOMAS GOUGE.

EZRA

God's Controverſie WITH *ENGLAND*, FOR Contemning Deliverances.

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Ezra 9. 13, 14.

——*Seeing that thou our God haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve, and haſt given us ſuch a deliverance as this: Should we again break thy Commandments?*

——*Wouldſt not thou be angry with us till thou hadſt conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no remnant nor eſcaping?*

SInce one effectual means to promote the deſerved honour and tranſcending glory of the Soveraign Governour of Humane Affairs, is by a ſuitable Improvement of his various Providences to us; an induſtrious inquiry into the bleſſed deſigns of his providential diſpenſations, in order thereto, will be accounted no unneceſſary work to ſuch as intend that Religious improve-

ment of them. Of these providential occurrences, which may not be pretermitted without some serious Meditations on them, some are of that sort which we call common, from the frequent enjoyment of them, (of which kind is our daily Preservation, Provision, Gubernation) although they are special, considering our unspeakable misery without them; and these (I say) cannot be slighted and dis-regarded, without an unworthy disparagement of infinite mercy, and contempt of Soveraign Majesty.

But besides these ordinary works of Providence, there are oftentimes extraordinary works presented to our view, attended with special displays, and bearing some eminent impressions of Mercy or Justice; which are not to be over-look'd in a cursory way, or dispatcht with a single glance, but require a deliberate Meditation, a fixed inspection, and a singular improvement. Such unusual dispensations from the Almighties hand, have frequently been known, both in ways of Mercy and Justice in our sinful Nation, which hath been a Theatre for the mixed displays of these Glorious Attributes for many years; and especially

ly of late, our long-ſuffering God hath ſtampt moſt illuſtrious impreſſions of mercy on many of his eminent Providences to us; of which our Miraculous Deliverance in part vouchſafed to us, is an apparent teſtimony; and requires the moſt faithful improvement, that finite creatures can make of the doings of an infinite God.

The Deliverance I mean was that, when the ſupream Overſeer of created beings in all their operations, caſt an unmerited eye of pity on our ſinful Nation, languiſhing with undiſcerned diſtempers: when the boundleſs goodneſs of the Eternal God, made a timely ſtop to our haſtning ruine: when the heavenly witneſs that is conſcious to the ſecret actions of unmindful Mortals, detected the vaulted contrivances of the undermining Moles of our Common-wealth; when the Almighty God, who places bounds to the roaring waves, and ſays to the raging ſea, Hitherto and no farther, took off the Chariot-wheels of our furious Enemies: when he unto whom belongs the iſſues from death, as by a glorious Reſurrection, reſcued us from the jaws of deſtruction, who bore the Image of death upon

us: when the faithful God diſcovered the unfaithful dealings of perfidious Plotters; and by a glorious ray of infinite goodneſs ſhining on our clouded Land, hath made us a Land of *Goſhen*, who were near to be made a miſerable *Golgotha*. This is the Deliverance never to be forgotten, the wonderful work with ſuch impreſſions of mercy, which is to be beheld with moſt fixed intention.

Now can we caſt our eye on this magnificent maſter-piece of mercy, but our eye muſt needs affect our hearts, and ingenerate ſuch motions as were in the heart of thankful *David*, *Pſal.* 116. 12. *What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his mercy?*

Can we paſs by this Heavenly favour, without a pious inquiry into the gracious deſigns of our bleſſed God in beſtowing of it? Hath this unexpected deliverance continued the choiceſt of bleſſings to us, and ſhall we diſ-appoint the expectations of God, who is looking for ſignal requitals of it? Surely ſuch a glorious work as this, wherein hath appeared the immediate hand of Almighty God, the moſt wonderful goodneſs of his ſweeteſt nature, the higheſt teſtimonies

nies of his enduring patience, can never be over-looked by us; unleſs we deſign to affront his mercy, diſdain his kindneſs, and dare his juſtice.

But oh miſerable Nation! oh ungrateful people! Where are the tokens of thankful reſpects for unmerited favours? What notice is there taken that ſuch a work hath been done amongſt us? Who lays to heart the operations of his hands? Where are the lips that praiſe him, the lives that honour him for it? The Idolatrous *Philiſtines* could aſſemble and ſacrifice to their *Dagon*, for delivering *Sampſon* their Enemy into their hands, *Judg.* 16. 23, 24. But when have we aſſembled to offer the ſacrifice of praiſe to our God, for delivering us from the hands of our Enemies? Oh regardleſs people! if talking of Deliverance be recompenſe enough, we have paid it; if curſing our foes be ſufficient reward, we have given it: but if repentance of diſobedience be the onely return, we have yet omitted it: if reformation can onely be regarded as a ſuitable requital, we are without it. What have we ſeen but unchanged converſations in our changed condition? What have we given to the Lord, but a dou-

bled measure of Impieties, for his doubled mercies? What have we done, but endeavoured to revenge our selves on the mercy of God that hath spared us?

Oh undeserving Generation that we are! how do we enjoy mercies, and never improve them? How do we comfortably reap the profit of Deliverance, and unfaithfully rob the Lord of the glory of it? How do we bless our selves in escapes, and forget the Almighty that gives them to us? We are sollicitous wanters, but careless enjoyers. How are we joyful when getting out of danger; but how little careful then are we to be getting out of sin? Methinks the Moon that is often changing and still keeps its old spots, is a plain Emblem of our wicked Nation: when all things are ruining, sin remains unruined; when enjoying escapes from ruine, still sin remains to be again a cause of ruine. Oh what unchangeable *Ethiopians* are we in our sins? How like are we to the hardned Mariners, who escaping the fatal dangers of a threatning storm, remain secure till another Tempest hangs over their heads? What succession of mercies do we promise our selves, in the vilest continuance in destroying iniquities!

But

But is there no hope that the consideration of delivering Mercies may overpower us from going on in our wicked courses? Were they prest upon our Consciences, would they not prevail to effect some reformation? It may be a word that will suit to the works of the Lord amongst us, may make some impression, effect some conviction, and produce some amendment. Behold then a Word enough to melt our hearts with the reading of it; to dissolve us into tears by meditating on it; to make us reform by applying of it. — *Seeing thou hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandment? —— Wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?* &c.

In these words are contain'd,

1. A thankful acknowledgment of the undeserved mercy their gracious God had exercised towards them; consisting in these two things.

1. He had punished them less than their sins deserved. They admire the Clemency of Almighty God, that when their iniquities were wonderfully great, their punishments should be mitigated with so much mercy. The Hebrew Verb חשך here

here uſed, ſignifies (1.) *Cohibere ſe*, to with-hold ones ſelf. And ſo the ſence is elegant, Thou haſt with-held thy ſelf from doing what our iniquities deſerved from thee. Thou wouldſt not ſuffer thy direful anger to break out againſt us to the utmoſt, but didſt refrain thy ſelf from making an irreparable ruine amongſt us. Hadſt thou proportioned thy deſtroying judgment, to our daring provocations, and thy wrathful dealings to our vaſt deſerts, we had not been a people at this very day: but thy mercy detain'd the hands of thy Juſtice; and thou didſt not ſo much deſign to conſume us, but onely to correct us. The like acknowledgment have we cauſe to make, having had experiences of the ſame clemency: for when our provoked God hath come out againſt us with waſting Wars, deſtroying Plagues, devouring Flames; yet he reſtrained his wrath, and ſuſpended the greateſt part of the judgments we deſerved from him; and although when he began, there was cauſe enough to make a full end of us all, yet in the midſt of Juſtice he remembred mercy, and graciouſly deſiſted from ruining of us.

2. The word ſignifies *Cohibere aliquid*,

to

to reſtrain any thing elſe. So the ſence is, Thou haſt reſtrained, kept down our ſins from riſing up in judgment againſt us; for had they appeared againſt us, we had utterly been ruin'd.

2. This Mercy was expreſt to them, by the working out for them ſo great a deliverance; *Since thou haſt given us ſuch a deliverance*, implying how merciful, how ſeaſonable, how undeſerved a deliverance that was they received; and ſuch is ours, that the Almighty God hath vouchſafed to us.

2. You have here the deep ſenſe of duty that was upon his heart; which duty was to break off ſin, which onely can be a juſt return to God for his goodneſs.

3. You have his ſenſe of danger, if ſin was perſiſted in after ſuch a deliverance; *Wouldſt thou not conſume us?* &c.

4. You have the aggravation of that deſtruction under ſuch hainous ſinning, *Till there were no remnant nor eſcaping.*

The general Heads I ſhall inſiſt upon, which are immediately contained in, or may ſerve to explain this Text, are theſe.

1. That the great deſign of God in beſtowing merciful deliverances on a peo-

ple, is to reclaim them from ſin.

2. That ſuch is that wickedneſs that is in the moſt of men, that they are prone to wax worſe after deliverances.

3. That ſinning after Deliverance, is the moſt hainous ſinning.

4. That ſinning after Deliverance hath a peculiar influence to haſten deſtruction.

5. That Deſtruction for ſins after Deliverance, will be the moſt dreadful deſtruction. Now I ſhall endeavour, *Deo juvante*, to ſpeak ſomething to each of theſe in order.

PROPOSITION 1.

The deſign of God in delivering a people from eminent dangers of ruine, is to oblige them to forſake all ſinful and wicked practices. The intent of delivering mercies, is to cauſe us to repent of our deſtroying iniquities. The main end of Gods exerciſing goodneſs towards us, is only to effect ſome goodneſs in us. The deſign of ſpecial mercies, is to make us a ſpecial people. The Almighty God delights not to reduce a people from ſinful courſes, by laying them under ſuch heavy judgments as may render them incapable

capable of committing thoſe ſins, which otherwiſe their wills incline them to; but the way of his pleaſure is to confer ſuch mercies upon them, as may ſweetly conquer their ſtubborn hearts, and gain their averſe minds to himſelf. Hence when the ſin and folly of an obſtinate people hath reduc'd them to inextricable ſtraits, the eternal God doth not ſuffer his deſtroying wrath to break forth againſt them, ſaying, I ſee them helpleſs and paſt recovery, now therefore will I eaſe me of my adverſaries, and avenge me of my enemies; but compaſſion being kindled in his merciful breaſt, Now ſays the Lord I will lend a helping hand, and give them that experience, and thoſe evidences of my goodneſs, that ſhall for ever oblige them to me, and win them from proceeding in ways of rebellion againſt me. Thus all our deliverances lay us under perpetual obligations to devote our ſelves to the bleſſed work and ſervice of our delivering God.

Our mercies are not beautiful Tombes in our way, wherewith we may delight our eyes; but Chariots to carry us on with more pleaſure and cheerfulneſs in the ways of our gracious God. The end

of

of deliverances is plainly ſeen, *Luke* 1. 74, 75. *That we being delivered from the hands of our enemies, may ſerve him without fear, in Righteouſneſs and Holineſs all the days of our lives.* We are not delivered from enemies, to continue enemies to God; but an eſcape is given us from the hands of enemies, that we may reſign up our ſelves into the hands of our God.

When God prevents our becoming miſerable preys to unmerciful foes, 'tis to oblige us ever to praiſe him with thankful Hearts and obedient lives, *Pſal.* 105. 37. *He brought forth that people with ſilver and gold; ſpread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night*, v. 39. *He brought quails, and ſatisfyed them with bread from heaven; he brought forth his people with joy, and his choſen with gladneſs*, v. 43. And what was the deſign of all this favour? *v.* 45. *That they might obſerve his Statutes, and keep his Laws.* Although our mercies are Gods gifts, yet they greatly raiſe our debts. The favours we receive from our gracious God, are not as payments given to ſervants to diſcharge from work, but like the encouragements tender Parents give to Children, to increaſe their dutiful ſervice and obedience. 'Tis promiſed

miſcd. *Hoſ.* 3. *ult. They ſhall fear the Lord and his goodneſs*; or, *ob tantam Dei beneficentiam*, *Grot.* they ſhall ſerve and obey him for his goodneſſes, in returning and reſtoring of them: that wonderful kindneſs was for this end, to ingenerate obedient love, and induce to conſtant loyalty to ſo bleſt a Redeemer.

Now had not theſe bleſſed intentions and gracious deſigns been in the heart of our God, he had never exerciſed his Almighty power for our help and relief, as of late he hath done: but he deſigning to reclaim us from ſin, hath reſtrained his wrath, and revealed our danger; that ſo by giving us the advantage of ſuch a mercy, we might render to him the glory of it. And what can be more reaſonable, than to give God the glory of that, whereof we have the profit? What more unjuſt, than to croſs ſuch gracious deſigns as theſe? And therefore unleſs we deſign to debar our ſelves from future mercies, it concerns us greatly to anſwer Gods deſign in theſe; unleſs we intend by our incorrigibleneſs to bring irreparable ruines upon our ſelves, it highly concerns us by this goodneſs of God, to be led to that Repentance and Reformation intended

ded by it. For to what end hath this *grace of God appear'd, but to teach us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and that we might live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?*

I shall now propose some few Reasons, why the glorious God condescends to strive with Man with thus much goodness, rather than reduce him by forcible coactions, and destroying judgments; why he doth not ease him of his Enemies by his Almighty power, but endeavour to make them friends by obliging favours.

REASON 1.

Because this way and method is most suitable to his gracious nature. Rough spirited men in reducing offenders, will use nothing but harsh severity: but such whose nature is tempered with amiable meekness, abhor such wrathful means; and will make experiment what clemency and kindness will do, before they proceed to powerful compulsions. Thus the great God having declared himself to be most gracious, will experience how far he can prevail by the exercise of goodness,

neſs, before he proceeds to the diſplays of his juſtice and greatneſs. So good is our God, that he is ready to make proof of the efficacy of a thouſand ſmiles of mercy, rather than of a ſingle ſtroak of Juſtice. The titles of honour which diſcover his nature, do moſtly ſet out his abounding goodneſs, *Exod.* 34. 5, 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in truth and goodneſs.* The whole world is embroidered with infinite impreſſions of goodneſs. Among his bleſſed Attributes, his grace is uppermoſt; and though he be equally juſt as good, yet he exerciſes his goodneſs more than his juſtice. This is the faireſt flower in the garland of Majeſty; the brighteſt ray that iſſues from that un-approachable light; the height of his immenſurable and Imperial glory. Now if we conſider his readineſs to mercy, and his ſlowneſs to anger; his frequency in diſplays of goodneſs, and the rarity of amazing judgments; his reſolvedneſs in ways of grace, and reſervedneſs in ways of juſtice; we may eaſily ſee 'tis moſt agreeable to his nature, to accompliſh his deſigns by clemency.

REA-

REASON 2.

Becauſe this merciful method is moſt agreeable to the nature of man. The moſt powerful Engine to attract the will of man, is the good will and mercy of God. Man being of a generous ſpirit, is more eaſily drawn than driven, perſwaded than forced. Murdering ſeverity may force a ſlaviſh fear, but never produce any loving obedience. Dipping in the ſweeteſt oyl of mercy, is moſt effectual to ſoften the hardned hearts of men. *Pariſienſis* relates a Hiſtory of a ſtubborn ſinner, that nothing would reclaim; but God heaping up favours upon him, at laſt he cries out, *Viciſti benigniſſime Deus indefatigabili bonitate:* Oh kindeſt God, thou haſt conquered me with thy unwearied goodneſs. Were a man to relieve an inveterate enemy in a periſhing condition, it could not but effect a change, and make him become an intimate and conſtant friend. Sullen, peremptory, and imperious commands, have little influence to ſway obdurate Enemies. The kindneſs of conſcientious *David* in ſparing *Saul* his mortal Enemy, melted his

his ſtony heart, and made him promiſe eternal friendſhip, 1 *Sam.* 26. 21. *I have ſinned*, ſays Saul, *I will do thee no more harm, ſeeing my life was precious in thy ſight.* And will not the moſt refractory ſinner be ready to come to terms of peace, at the receiving ſuch kindneſs from the hand of God? will he not ſay, Ah Lord, I have been an ungodly Enemy, and impudent Rebel againſt thee; thou hadſt me in thy hand, and mighteſt have ſuffer'd my bloody Enemies to have cut me off; thou mighteſt have diſpatcht me to eternal Torments: but ſince thou haſt been ſo gracious to ſpare and deliver me thy Enemy, henceforth I ſhall ever be thy friend, and never offer to rebel any more.

REASON 3.

God proceeds in theſe gracious methods, becauſe of the experienc'd ineffectualneſs of deſtroying judgments to effect a ſincere Repentance, and produce an unfeigned obedience. Mercy hath ever prevailed more with ſinners than wrath. Severity in exerciſing judgments, may curb a head-ſtrong ſinner from outward enormities; but the bent of his will, and the

the inclination of his heart ſtill remains to commit it. Theſe uſually have no farther influence, than to render men like roaring Lyons confin'd by Iron grates; like ravenous dogs reſtrain'd by heavy chains; onely making an impediment from acting, not an amendment as to the will to act. A lock may ſtop a Thief, yet it alters not his mind.

This ineffectualneſs of judgments, hath often been evidenc'd in the deviliſh behaviour that hath appeared in many under them. How many in blaſphemous enraged paſſions, have belch'd out moſt execrable Oaths and reproachful ſpeeches againſt Heaven, and the inſtruments of Divine vengeance, *Et quem oderunt perire cupiunt*; wiſhing the deſtruction of the God that deſtroyed them? As the *Cilicians* made War againſt Mount *Ætna*, ſpitting out ſulphureous flames upon them: with ſuch madneſs do rebellious wretches contend with the Almighty, conſuming them by the fire of deſerved vengeance.

How often do men bid defiance to God heaping up plagues upon them! and ſtopt in their ſinful courſes as *Balaam* by the Angel, ſtill will ſpur on in deſpite of God himſelf.

Zeph.

Zeph. 3.5. *Every morning he brings his judgments to light, but the wicked know no shame.* Sins were continued under continual judgments; so *Jer.* 5.3. *They were smitten, and did not grieve.*

And if at any time judgments have affected a sinful people, by reason of the extremity of them: yet all those appearances of Devotion under them, have been mostly delusions; being onely the workings of nature, expressing a sense of suffering, not the effects of grace, declaring a sorrow for sinning: hence hardned *Pharaoh* under the distress of miraculous judgments, is seemingly moved with Repentance. Thus thousands are beautiful in pangs, but 'tis onely the operations of judgments on the body, not their impression on the heart. But this ineffectualness of destroying judgments, is declared abundantly by the following carriage of the sufferers by them. For how many have we known, after the wearing off the smarting sense of vengeance, have proved the grandees and Imperialists in provoking wickednesses? and the storm of judgements being a little over, have rid on with a full carreer, and unbridled chase, in their unlicensed courses.

Since

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Since

Since then this way effects ſo little, God will rather make uſe of mercies: ſince horrid deſolations will make no more impreſſion, God will make experiment what deliverance will do. So then, to conclude this head, God uſes theſe means, becauſe as *Sola miſericordia deducit Deum ad homines*, ſo *Sola miſericordia reducit homines ad Deum*: As mercy onely brings down God to man, ſo mercy onely brings back man to God.

PROPOSITION 2.

Such is the wickedneſs of our corrupted hearts, that we are prone to proceed in ſin, notwithſtanding the Lord is uſing theſe means with us to reclaim us. We are apt to make uſe of our deliverances to further our ſins, rather than improve them to the forſaking of them. For as the red Sea drinks in the River *Jordan*, yet is never the ſweeter; and the vaſt Ocean all other Rivers, yet is not the freſher: ſo we receive the moſt excellent mercies, and yet are but little the better. So entire is our curſed affection to our eſpouſed Luſts, that whoever be diſ-engaged, and whoever be diſpleaſed, we are

too

too much resolv'd to continue in them. Hence the mercies God gives for encouragements to serve him, we turn to be instruments of sinning against him. When God doth most for us in ways of mercy, we are prone to do most against him in ways of sin. 'Tis reported of the *Leopard*, that 'tis most savage to those that do most for it. Too true it is of us; we are wretchedly most unkind, to those that shew most kindness to us. *Felicitate corrumpimur*, outward felicitie makes us abound in iniquity. After the receipt of special favours, we often loosen the reins to Impiety, and run more extravagantly after our own inventions. How many become more nimble in the feats of iniquity, by being anointed with the oyl of mercy? Men nurse the hateful brats of their deviliſh lusts, at the breast of Divine bounty. Our envenom'd natures extract food for the nourishment of abominable sins, from the singular favours of a gracious God.

As when the season grows warm, by fructifying rays of the Sun, the weeds spring up; so by the increase of mercies, there is often the abounding of iniquity, *Hos* 10. 1. *Israel is an empty vine*: or, ἀλίμνουσα, *vitis luxurians*; a wild vine: *according*

cording to the multitudes of his fruits, he hat increaſed the altars, i. e. *Quo res habuit pr ſperiores, eo magis indulſit Idololatriæ*, Grot The more proſperity, the more Idolatr 'Tis obſerved of the Spleen, the greate it grows, the leſs the body is: the mor Temporal mercies, the leſs heavenly ſpi rits and holy obedience. *Hoſ.* 4. 7. *As the increaſed, they ſinned againſt me.* Heb. כרבם *Sicut multiplicari eis*, as I *multiplyed t them*; or, as I increaſed deliverances, ho nour, riches; ſo they ſinned againſt me As judgments will not bridle us, ſo mer cies will not break us off our ſinning. *Iſa.* 26. 10. *Let favour be ſhown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteouſneſs.* In the for mer verſes the Prophet ſhews, that the people of God would ſerve him even un der afflictions; but as for the wicked, nei ther mercies nor afflictions work upon them. Mercies are meſſengers to inſtruct us our duty; but although for many years we have been called upon by them, yet how little have we learnt to love, ſerve, and obey our God by them? *Noah* mira culouſly delivered, is abominably drawn into ſin. He that had the higheſt proofs of the mercy and juſtice of God, mercy to himſelf, juſtice to the world, lyes drunk

in

in his Tent; preſerved from waters, overcome by wine: behold, you may ſee him guilty of the ſin for which he ſaw the world condemned; you may ſee him to be rebuked for the ſin he ſo often had reproved: and he that was ſo holy before, now becomes a pattern of uncleanneſs, and example for future wickedneſs: thus prone are the beſt to ſin after deliverance. Thus holy *Hezekiah*, 2 *Chron.* 32.24, 25. God delivered him from death, but he *rendred not to the Lord according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up*, not with thankfulneſs, but haughtineſs; not in praiſes, but with pride. *Deut.* 32.15. *Jeſhurun waxed fat and kicked, then he forſook the God that made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his ſalvation.* Deliverance had made way for his promotion; and he being promoted, God was rejected. Righteous *Lot* by diſtinguiſhing favour eſcaping the flames of *Sodom*, fell into the fire of ſin. The aſhes of *Sodom*, the pillar of ſalt, made him not wiſe enough to ſhun the drunken bed of Inceſt. Who could have thought *Lot* ſhould fall into ſuch Impieties, upon the receipt of ſuch mercies? but thus prone are we to abuſe goodneſs, and ready to ſlight the great-

greateſt kindneſs: how often do we turn our Phyſick to poiſon?

How often do we make our Mercies *Commeatus peccandi*, Inlets to ſin? 'Tis ſaid concerning *Eve*, that God deſign'd her an helper to *Adam*, and made her of his rib; but the devil μέλος εἰλήφει, βέλ & ἐτόξευσεν, took his rib, and made it a fatal dart. So God gives Mercies with good intentions, but Satan ſiding with our corrupt inclinations, makes uſe of them to our great diſadvantage.

I ſhall now conſider how it comes to paſs, that Deliverances have no more Influence upon us, and how we become ſo prone to ſin after them.

(1.) It ariſes from the mighty Power that accuſtomed ſins have upon the heart. When higheſt Reaſons are obliging to leave ſin, the force of Cuſtom prevents their operation. When men are ſoaked in Senſuality, fleſht in Villany, thoroughpaced in Rebellious courſes, what is able to change them? Hereby the heart is ſo direfully hardned, the Devil's Kingdom ſo invincibly fortified, and ſin itſelf ſo much endeared, that there is unſpeakable difficulty in conquering of it. *Ezek.* 16. 4. When delivered from *Egypt* 'tis ſaid, *Their Navil*

Navil was not cut. The Navil is that whereby the Child is ſupplyed with nouriſhment in the Mothers Womb. So this expreſſion means, *Iſrael* was ſtill drawing in *Egyptian* Manners and Superſtitions; being accuſtomed to them, they ſtill hankered after them, notwithſtanding their great deliverance.

And although for a while a deliverance may ſeem to make ſome impreſſion, yet as the water heated, *redit ad ingenium*, grows cold again: ſo affections to God wear off, and men are hankering after their former Luſts. So *Ezek.* 23. 8. *Neither left ſhe her whoredoms brought from* Egypt. *Difficile eſt ab uſitatis deſinere:* Accuſtomed ſins are hardly deſerted: ſins often renewed, are hardly reformed; ſudden mercies, though never ſo great, will hardly wear out continued ſins.

2. The reaſon why our Deliverances work no greater Reformation, is, becauſe we fix our Eyes too much upon ſecond cauſes, and inferiour Inſtruments, without a due acknowledgment of the hand of God. Hence we are prone to conceive our ſelves more obliged to Men than to God himſelf. How wickedly do many aſcribe more to Humane Policy, and

Heathenish Fortune, than to infinite power and Heavenly favour? *Hos.* 11.3. *They knew not that I healed them. Nescire dicitur qui gratiam non refert:* He is ignorant who neither observes nor answers the merciful hand of God.

Attributing Deliverances to man, hinders the performance of duty to God. The reason why mercies are not seconded with obedience to God, is, because we look too much to second causes; so those *Hab.*1.16. *Their portion was fat, and they sacrificed to their nets, and burnt incense to their drags.* Thus the *Assyrian* proudly ascribed all to himself, *Isa.* 10. 14. *By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent.* How can the mercy of God be answered, if it be not owned? How can we requite God for delivering, if we deny the receipts of deliverance from him? If we look not upon our mercies as given by God, we shall give God nothing for his mercies.

3. Deliverances are no more influential to reclaim from sin, because of our unreasonable oblivion of them. Our greatest mercies are but nine days wonders; present impressions made by deliverance are soon worn off by neglect of future consideration.

ſideration. The ſenſe of our Engagements to Obedience wearing off, our inclinations to ſin make head. When mercies are new, how frequent is our remembrance of them? Whilſt employed in our daily labours, our minds are admiring delivering love: When waking in the night, theſe are the objects of Meditation; when converſing with friends, theſe are the Theams we diſcourſe of. Now ſomewhat muſt be done to requite this kindneſs; but too ſudden a forgetfulneſs anticipates and prevents the performance of our acknowledged obedience. *Deut.* 32. 17, 18. they are charged with abominable ſins; and it ſtands as a reaſon, becauſe *they forgot the God that formed them, and the rock that begat them.* Did we not forget our mercies, our Conſciences would force us to forſake our ſins. Were our hearts more but Repoſitories for Gods favours, ſo much Iniquity would not be lodged in them. Forgetting Gods mercies, is not onely a baſe unworthy ſin, but a breeding ſin: many deſperate ſins ariſe from deſpiſing the kindneſs of our God. And oh, how unſpeakably ſtrange is it, that we can forget him, who doth ſo much to be remembred? That we can ſuffer his

mercies to pass out of our mind, whose mercies are new every moment? How impossible would it be to live in unlamented sin, did we live in the sense of undeserved mercies! Hence it is we are so prone to sin after deliverances, because we are so apt to suffer them to slip out of our labile memories.

4. This continuance in sin after deliverances, arises from persons bolstring up themselves with sinful presumptions that the dangers of destruction are past. When men begin to apprehend all things are well, they are apt to take occasion to do ill. When men are conceiving the bitterness of death is past, they little mind to reform the baseness of their lives. They care not how little they live to God, when they presume they shall live long. *Eccles.* 8. 11. *Because sentence is not speedily executed, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in themselves to do evil,* מלא *Syr. roboratur*: their hearts are strengthened, emboldned in them to go on in evil. Διὰ τῦτο ἐπληρεφορήθη καρδία, *&c.* Because of this delaying judgments, they go on with a *full confidence*, they sin with courage. This is as wind to their sayls, that drives them on briskly in sinful courses. With this

this did the wicked Jews under Divine comminations hearten themſelves in their ways, *Ezek.* 11.3. *ſaying, It is not near.* Gods abſtinence from judgments, was made an encouragement for continuance in ſin. So *Ezek.* 12. 21, 22. *The days are prolonged.* Carnal perſons are willing to go on in ſin as long as they can: and when dangers are a little gone off, they more boldly go on in deſperate ſinning.

5. This proneneſs to ſin after ſuch mercy, ariſes from flattering expectations, that in renewed returns of Diſtreſs, they ſhall ever meet with the ſame deliverance. How do men argue from their preſent ſafety, to their future ſecurity? How fondly do men conceive that God will be ever merciful, becauſe of his preſent mercies? Did men wiſely conſider after deliverance, how ſoon they may ſtand in need of the ſame helping arm, how ſoon they may want the ſame mercy, they could not be ſo audacious as to ſlight and contemn it, leſt the next time they be deprived of it. Gods preſent deliverances are evidences of his power to deliver us again, but not aſſurances of his Will to do it. 'Tis a groundleſs Suppoſition men go upon, who think Mercies are entail'd upon them, and

inſeparably annexed to them. We ſhall experience, if we do not leave off ſinning, God can leave off delivering. If we can ſtill forſake God, he can at laſt forſake us.

6. We are thus inclined to ſin againſt God after deliverance, as we being delivered, our hearts are brought off from their dependance on God, and we are magnifying our ſelves inſtead of God. When God hath given us our precious lives from the hands of devouring Enemies, we imagine we can live of our ſelves, and thence are regardleſs of living to God. *Hoſ.* 13. 6. *They were filled, and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me.* Their outward fruitfulneſs cauſed their ſinful forgetfulneſs. Our hearts are apt to be ſet upon enjoyments, and not on the God that gives them. *Hoſ.* 4. 11. *Whoredome and wine take away the heart.* The *Hebr.* word יקח ſignifies *auferre*, to take away by force; ſo did thoſe things take away their heart from God by force; or *occupare*, to occupy. They occupy and take up that room in the heart God ſhould have. Thus we having worldly enjoyments continued by deliverances, our hearts are detained by them, that we mind not

not God, care not how we go on in ſin againſt him; mind not how little obedience we yield to him, as if we could live well enough without him.

7. This proceeding in ſin is partly cauſed by perſons apprehending themſelves to be innocent, and their courſes to be harmleſs, from the deliverances God gives to them. Carnal perſons are apt to reckon their ways to be lawful, becauſe they are ſpared and unpuniſhed in them. *Hoſ.* 12. 8. *Ephraim ſaid, I am become rich, I have found me out riches; in all my labours they ſhall find no iniquity in me, that were ſin.* As much as to ſay, Were my courſes unrighteous, they would not be proſperous; whatever the Prophets charge me with, it appears by the dealings of God with me, that my doings are good; if I were ſo ſinful, I ſhould not be ſucceſful. Thus corrupted perſons will vainly argue from Gods delivering; were I ſo wicked, were my actions ſo diſpleaſing, God would not have ſpared me, but delivered me to deſtruction. But oh how vain are theſe reaſonings! God bears with long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath prepared for deſtruction; out of his mercy he gives a ſpace to repent of thy ſins.

And who ſo wicked to conclude, that becauſe God exerciſes patience, therefore they are no offenders? This is a ſign of Gods goodneſs, but not of thine.

PROPOSITION 3.

Sinning after Deliverance, is the moſt hainous ſinning. It renders ſin exceeding great, to commit it after great mercies. It is a great ſin, to count any ſin ſmall, that is committed againſt a great God: yet ſin hath its aggravations, and admits of degrees, according to the circumſtances under which 'tis committed. There are two things which render a ſin moſt abominable; when ſin is committed againſt light, and againſt love. They are no little nor light ſins, that are aggravated with convictions by light: nor are ſins againſt love of an inferiour nature; nothing more intolerable to Man or God, than to have ill will for good deeds. 'Tis ſinful to render evil for evil to man, much more to render evil for good to God. What more provoking ſight can be beheld, than a man impudent in evil under judgment, and barren in good under mercies? Affronts to love, are more unſuf-

ſufferable than Rebellion under diſplays of wrath. The higheſt unkindneſs, is the higheſt ſinfulneſs. The ſin of *David* is aggravated by the recording Gods kindneſs to him, 2 *Sam.* 12. 7, 8, 9. *I delivered thee out of the hand of* Saul, *and I gave thee thy maſters houſe* —— *And if that had been too little, I would moreover have given thee ſuch and ſuch things. Wherefore then haſt thou deſpiſed the command of the Lord, to do this evil in his ſight?* To ſin in the face of God when ſmiling upon us with unmerited mercy, is one of the greateſt contempts can be caſt upon God. To manifeſt our ſinfulneſs, when we enjoy the greateſt teſtimonies of goodneſs, is the height of madneſs. To withdraw our necks from an uneaſie galling yoak, to rebel under the ſeverities of a cruel Tyrant, to caſt off the ſervice of an imperious Maſter, may admit ſome excuſe; but to wax wanton under mercies, to deſpiſe the clemency of Heaven, to deny obedience to a loving Father, is an offence indefendible, a crime unpardonable. When God would lay a people under a conviction of the hainouſneſs of their crimes, he repeats his gracious dealings to them. *Jerem.* 2. 20. *Of old time I have broken thy yoke, i. e.* When

thou wert in *Egyptian* bondage under intolerable ſlavery, I ſet thee free: And *thou ſaidſt thou wouldſt not tranſgreſs*, yet thou haſt ſlighted my favours, and broken thy vows; and under *every green tree thou wandreſt playing the harlot.* And v. 22. this is noted for an indelible ſin; ſuch ſins as theſe are not μόνον γεγραμμένα, ἀλλὰ γλυπτὰ, not written, but engraven: they are of the deepeſt die, and moſt permanent ſtain: *Hoſ.* 7. 15. *Though I have bound and ſtrengthened their arms, yet do they imagine miſchief againſt me.* It hath an alluſion to men with broken bones; Oh what would they give for a healing Chirurgion? what price would they give to be free from pain? ſo theſe in diſtreſs would promiſe any thing to God for deliverance: but, ſays the Lord, though I bound them up and eaſed them, though I ſtrengthened them againſt the deſtructive aſſaults of their enemies, yet ſtill with the higheſt wickedneſs and unkindneſs they imagine miſchief againſt me: the more I did to engage them, the more they have done to diſhonour me.

The people of *Iſrael* were charged with their ſinning at *Gilgal* above all other places, *Hoſ.* 9. 15. *All their iniquity is in* Gilgal.

Gilgal. The *Hebr.* word כל which we render *all*, ſignifies *ſummum, præcipuum, i. e.* their *higheſt*, *chiefeſt*, moſt notorious ſin was at *Gilgal*; why there? becauſe there it was they received abundance of mercies. Here was the great circumciſion, when the reproach was rolled away, after they had paſt over *Jordan*, and arrived to the Land of *Canaan*, *Joſh.* 5. 7. here *Joſhua* pitcht the twelve ſtones, the everlaſting memorial of their wonderful deliverance out of *Jordan*, *Joſh.* 4. 20. here was the beginning of the reſt promiſed to them in the Land of *Canaan*. Now to be involved in ſin, when encompaſt with ſo many mercies; to be forſaking God after ſuch late experience of his goodneſs, this was the higheſt crime imaginable.

Now I ſhall lay down ſome particular aggravations of ſins after deliverances, that ſo you may lament thoſe you have committed, and labour to prevent them for the future.

1. Such ſins moſt wretchedly caſt a blot upon the moſt Holy God, as if he were a countenancer of ſin, and a patron to perſons Impieties, rather than a ſevere avenger of them. Chriſt was accounted a friend to Publicans and ſinners, for ſhewing

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ing kindneſs unto them: and will not Atheiſtical wretches be ready to aſperſe the glorious God as a friend to ſin, for improving his power to deliver ſuch perſons as improve his deliverance onely for ſin? 'Tis reported of one prophane *Dionyſius*, that when by his covetous pilfering he had preyed on a Temples glory, and enricht himſelf with its Sacred Treaſure, and after tranſporting his Treaſures, eſcaping a fatal Shipwrack of which he was in danger, with the greateſt impudence cryes out, *How do the Gods love Sacriledge!* Becauſe he preſumed they delivered him a Robber, he imagined they loved Robbery: *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Becauſe I kept ſilence, thou thoughtſt me altogether ſuch an one as thy ſelf*, i. e. *Quod tuis maleficiis delector*, Muis. Gods patient forbearance, made him reckon God unrighteous as himſelf. To go on in ſin when delivered from ruine, is practically to ſay, I am delivered to ſin. Such an Impiety was charged on the Jews, *Jerem.* 7. 10. *Will ye ſteal, and murder, and ſay, We are delivered to do all theſe abominations?* They were not come to that height of profaneneſs, to declare it in ſo many words; but by their ungodly courſes after his gracious deliverances,

rances, they did as much as ſay it. What is this but to make God an unholy God? What greater aggravations of our ſins can there be, than to caſt dirt on the holineſs of God, which is the aggravation of all his glory? Certainly, if God ſuffers diſhonour by his exerciſing goodneſs to us, we ſhall ſuffer deſtruction for our abuſing of it. God will ſhew no favour to thoſe, who make him a favourer of ſin.

2. Such ſinning is ſo abominable, becauſe 'tis a juſtification of all our former ſins. This is in effect to ſay, We have done well enough in ſinning; God is not angry with us, therefore we will ſtill go on in our former courſes, and follow our old wickedneſſes. How provoking muſt this needs be to God? when inſtead of a humiliation for ſins, he ſees a juſtification of them: inſtead of a contrite lamentation for our evils, he finds an audacious approbation of them. How can a holy God bear this at our hands? We cannot juſtifie the beſt of our actions before the Lord, how abominable then to juſtifie thoſe that are apparent evils? It was very diſpleaſing to God for *Jonah* to ſay, *I do well to be angry*. And ſhall we

ſay,

ſay, We did well to be proud and profane, to be drunkards and ſwearers? and what elſe is our perſiſtence in ſin, but a teſtimony of our allowance of it?

3. Such ſinning, implies a daring provocation of God to deſtroy us. To deſpiſe God ſparing and delivering, is to dare him to ſmite and deſtroy us. Not to care for deliverance, is as much as to ſay, we do not fear deſtruction, *Iſa.* 5. 19. *Let him haſten his work that we may ſee it.* This impudent expreſſion either reſpects Gods power, *q. d.* let him do his worſt, we fear not, as men that had over-grown Divine Juſtice, and become too big and too ſtrong for the Almighties arm; or it may be ſpoken in reſpect of the Truths and threatnings declared by the Prophets, challenging God to the accompliſhment of them. But will God ſuffer himſelf to be dared by worms? can you daunt his unalterable courage? can you hold the Almighties hands, or lay bonds on his judgments, that they ſhall not deſtroy you? Will God ſuffer his creatures to inſult over him? are we out of his reach, that we fear no ruine? can we match him with equal forces? ſure we are nothing to him. How then can he indure a challenge from us?

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How can he ſuffer our ſins after mercies? By theſe ſins we are like thoſe, *Job* 15. 25, 26. *Who ſtretch out their hands againſt God, and ſtrengthen themſelves againſt the Almighty*, &c. But who ever contended with him, and proſpered? It will be dreadful to fall into the hands of a living God. And this will certainly be the portion of thoſe that affront him with ſuch daring provocations.

4. Theſe ſins are ſo hainous, as by them the delivering mercy of God is horribly undervalued. What is our Rebellion after the reception of ſuch mercies, but to declare we account not our ſelves obliged to God for them? What is this but to diſown the greatneſs of the favours God beſtows upon us? What greater diſ-ingenuity can be expreſt, than to diminiſh the greateſt favours of God, in love to our devilliſh luſts? Every mercy that comes from ſo great a God, muſt needs be great: but to undervalue the choiceſt bleſſings and higheſt mercies, muſt needs be a point of the higheſt wickedneſs. VVas it a ſmall mercy, that by our late deliverance ſo many thouſand lives have been continued, ſuch multitudes of Souls have been kept out of Hell? Is it nothing in

your

your eyes to be delivered from Popiſh ſlavery? to have the glorious Goſpel continued amongſt us? Is the ſecurity of Church and State, the miraculous preſervation of Priviledges and Liberties a contemptible kindneſs? ſhall all theſe things have no notice taken of them? ſhall they all be diſ-regarded? will you ſay 'tis not worth while to leave ſinning for theſe? dare you declare they deſerve no obedience? let your Conſcience ſpeak, would not this be horrid Blaſphemy? could you bear ſuch undervaluing of kindneſs from fellow-Creatures? how then can God from you?

5. Thoſe Sins are the teſtimonies of the higheſt Ingratitude conceivable. Ingratitude is the worſt of Sins; and ſinning after Deliverance is the worſt Ingratitude. This is unkindneſs that pierces the heart of God, to rebel againſt him, dealing with us as the dearly beloved of his Soul. How ungrateful is't to aſſaſſinate a Prince, to whoſe care we owe our Lives and Fortunes? To rip open the bowels of her, to whom we owe our being? So is it to diſhonour a God, that is both our Protector and Benefactor, our Preſerver and Deliverer. *David* was great-

greatly incens'd at the Ingratitude of churliſh *Nabal*, 1 Sam. 25. 21. *Surely in vain have I kept all this fellow had in the wilderneſs, and he requites me evil for good.* Will not the Almighty thus complain of an ungrateful people; Surely in vain have I kept them from the hands of their bloody Enemies, in vain I have delay'd the execution of Judgment, ſince all my return is Diſhonour for Deliverance, ſinning for ſaving of them? May not God ſpeak to us, after the manner our bleſſed Saviour ſpoke to the Jews? *For which of my good works do you ſtone me?* For which of my good Works do you ſin againſt me? Will you oppoſe me, becauſe I appear ſo often for you? Will you hate me, becauſe I help you? Will you rebel, becauſe I relieve you? Is this the fruit of my Goodneſs? The Lord was greatly offended with his Vineyard, *Iſai.* 5. becauſe after all his care to make it fruitful, it brought forth wild grapes. *I looked it ſhould bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.* When God beſtows any Mercies upon us, his eye is upon us to ſee what improvement we are making of them: He looks to ſee what thou doſt with thy Time, thy Talent;

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His eye is upon thee, to ſee what uſe thou makeſt of Means, Deliverances, and all thy Enjoyments: And when he uſes good means, he looks for good fruit; and if we ungratefully bring forth wild Grapes, we ſhall highly provoke him, and to our diſadvantage diſpleaſe him. How intolerable a Sin muſt it needs be, to fight againſt God with his Goodneſs? to miſchief his Honour with his Mercies? Should you be an inſtrument of raiſing a decayed Friend, and he turn your Enemy, and uſe the eſtate procured by you, to manage miſchievous deſigns againſt you, would you not count it intolerable baſeneſs? Now what leſs, yea how infinitely more is your abuſing the Mercies of God, to the diſadvantage of his Glory, and diſhonour of his Name? Should a neighbourly Phyſician freely endeavour the relief of a helpleſs Beggar, and after his coſt and care, when this man is reſtor'd, he ſhould make it his work to ſtudy the death of this worthy Friend, how intolerable Ingratitude would this be accounted? What elſe is our ſinning againſt God, on his ſparing of us? What is it but the deſtroying the Honour of him, who ſaved us from deſtruction?

Deut.

Deut. 32. 6. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, ye fooliſh people and unwiſe?* When ungrateful *Brutus* was among thoſe that came to deſtroy *Cæſar*, he pathetically cryed out, *Etiam tu* Brute! What, thou my Son *Brutus!* Wilt thou ſtab me? May not God cry out upon us, What ye, oh People of *England*, will ye ſtill be enemies? You whom I have ſo deliver'd? You whom I have ſo often preſerved, ſhall I meet with theſe dealings from you? Of all people you are obliged to love and ſerve me, and will you improve all my Mercies againſt me?

6. By ſinning after Deliverance, we moſt unjuſtly deny to God that which is his Right and due for delivering of us. Deliverance is the price of God for our Lives and Services. God redeeming of us, we remain no longer our own, but are eſpecially obliged to be his. What can we give to God for preſerving our Lives, leſs than our ſelves? and that's an unanſwerable reward for the exerciſe of his Wiſdome and Power in delivering of us. Can we then rob God of his due, without the height of Injuſtice? Is not this the moſt intolerable Sacrilege? The Mercies of God are to hire us to Obedience.

dience. Will a Master suffer a Servant to be engag'd in the work of another, when he hath hired him for his own? Is it not a provoking sin, for you to be employ'd in the service of the Devil, when God hath hired you into his? The Apostle pressing the *Corinthians* to Obedience, tells them, *They are not their own, but are bought with a price.* Thus may we be perswaded to Obedience, by considering, God hath bought our Lives, by saving us from Death.

7. Sinning now is so heinous, as hereby God is frustrated of his designs in granting such favours. What may God expect, when stretching out his hand to help us, but that then we will incline our hearts to honour him? What are the designs of God in displays of Mercy, but to raise up Glory to himself? He exerciseth Goodness to promote his own Interest in the world, not the Devils. Will God exercise Mercy to his own disadvantage? Will a rational man put Weapons into the hands of those would slay him with them? Would you deliver a man to destroy you? Surely the Lord may justly expect Love for his Kindness, Duty for his Mercy, Obedience for his

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Deliverance. Isai. 63. 8, 9, 10. *He said, Surely, they are my people, children that will not lye; so he became their Saviour.* This verse contains a kinde of Expostulation that might be in God; Why should I save such a people as this? I have enough against them to destroy them. I have found their unfaithfulness to their promises, their unanswerableness to my gracious Providences, why should I deliver them? Then God comes to a Resolution, Mercy turns the scale, Goodness prevails; I will try them once more; they are my people, children that will not lye; I hope they will not frustrate me any more: I may take this opportunity to cut them off, but I will make experiment once more. But proving unfaithful, he became their enemy, and fought against them. How heinous a sin is it to cross Gods ends, to walk contrary to him!

8. Sinning now is so heinous, as 'tis not only a neglecting Duty, but despising Remedy. There are *Peccata contra officia*, and *contra remedia*; Sins against Duties in omitting things commanded, and sins against remedy, slighting and opposing the means which are designed for recove-

covery from former evils. And now what ſin can be greater, than to deſpiſe the means that are uſed to cure our bleeding wounds? what aggravates the ſin of unbelief, and makes it the deſtroying ſin, but becauſe 'tis the contemning of that bleſſed Remedy which is provided for miſerable ſinners? Hence this ſin binds on the ſinners guilt with an eternal bond, and makes Salvation impoſſible. Thus alſo ſlighting deliverance is the higheſt ſin, as thereby we bid open defiance to all means of recovering of us from ſin & deſtruction. Neglecting Salvation hath a moſt provoking influence on the wrath of God: *Heb.* 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation?* VVill the Lord bear this affront to his mercy, that when he is willing to ſave, we declare we regard no Salvation? This will be an unpardonable crime, there will be no eſcaping for us. To ſin with deliverance, is no leſs than to throw away the healing balm that mercy provides, and reſolve to make our wounds incurable.

PROPOSITION 4.

Sins after deliverance have a peculiar in-

influence to procure and haſten deſtruction. Our preſent ſafety is no ſecurity againſt future Judgments: deſtruction deferred by Gods deliverances, will be haſtned by our ſinning after them: thoſe whom undeſerved mercies can't reclaim, incenſed juſtice will ſpeedily ruine. The Monuments of greateſt mercies, have been made examples to declare the ſeverity of Juſtice for the abuſes of them. Such have experienced the moſt direful ſuffering, to whom the Almighty hath been moſt long-ſuffering. VVitneſs the deplorable ſtate of the hardned *Jews*, to whom the moſt ſingular favour was extended of any people on earth; yet now who more miſerable than thoſe rejected wretches, for their abuſing favours? Juſtice will frown moſt ſharply upon the diſdainful affronters of mercy. No people are nearer an utter deſolation, than thoſe who heap up ſin, when God is heaping up mercies. Although the Lord be moſt willing to ſmite, yet he knows not how to ſpare when provoked in this manner. *Jer.* 5. 7. *How ſhall I pardon thee for this.---When I had fed them to the full, then they committed Adultery*, v. 9. *Shall I not viſit for theſe things, ſaith the Lord? ſhall I not be aven-*

avenged on ſuch a Nation as this? Theſe ſins put God to a ſtand; he knows not how to go about a pardoning act, although he delights ſo greatly in it: how ſhall I pardon, *Heb.* אסלח *parcam*: how ſhall I ſpare thee any longer? I can't withhold the hands of my juſtice, I can't defer the puniſhment of theſe tranſgreſſions. Thence, *v.* 10. God gives a Commiſſion to enemies, *Go upon the Walls and deſtroy*, &c. delay no longer: let thoſe feel the ſmarting impreſſions of Juſtice, that deſpiſe the ſweeteſt expreſſions of mercy.

This wrath of God againſt deſpiſers of goodneſs, appears, 1 *Sam.* 12. 24, 25. *Conſider how great things the Lord hath done: but if ye ſtill continue to do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſumed both ye and your King.* When once a people riſe to that height of Impiety, that the moſt obliging kindneſs Heaven can ſhow, can't win their hearts to obedience; what can be expected from Heaven, but the ſevereſt vengeance an Almighty arm can bring upon them? Will not the Lord ſoon ruſh out upon a people with wonderful plagues, when they are knocking at the door of juſtice by ſuch impenitent courſes? The moſt gracious Prince would diſpatch that man, who

who ſhould impudently perſiſt in traiterous deſigns againſt him, after a deliverance from death by his pardoning of him. Thus will the King of Heaven miſerably deſtroy delivered ſinners rebelling againſt him. Divine patience ſheathing the ſword of Juſtice, will at laſt deſiſt its pleading for the abuſers of it; and impatient juſtice by its revengeful arm will avenge the quarrel of deſpiſed mercy: *Ezek.* 16. 43. *Becauſe thou haſt not remembred the days of thy youth: q. d.* the kindneſs and favour I then extended to thee; the deliverances thou hadſt from me: *Behold, I will recompence thy ways upon thy head.* Thou haſt grieved me with ſin, I will grind thee to pieces with judgments; thou haſt recompenſed me with hatred for love, I will recompenſe hatred for your hatred. Thus will God deprive thoſe of mercies, that deprive him of the glory of them. 2 *Kings* 21. 13. God there threatens to *wipe* Jeruſalem *as a man wipes a diſh, q. d.* He would take away all their delicate enjoyments, as meat is thrown out of a diſh. They ſhall feed on judgments, who were wanton when fed with mercies: but the *Hebrew* ſignifies, *Delebo Jeruſalem ſicut deleri ſolent tabulæ.* As im-

 preſſions

preſſions on tables are wont to be wiped out, ſo ſhall my impreſſions of goodneſs upon them: the former inſcriptions of honour and proſperity ſhall no more be ſeen, but the prints of deſtroying judgments ſhall be found upon them. It ſhall no more be written, Theſe are a people delivered, but, Theſe are a people deſtroyed for abuſing deliverance. This fatal conſequence of deſpiſing favours, may be illuſtrated from the words of God, *Hoſ.*6.4. *Oh* Ephraim *what ſhall I do unto thee? for your goodneſs is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it paſſeth away.* Many interpret *your goodneſs*, the goodneſs beſtowed on you, or your mercies. So the ſence is, My goodneſs that I beſtow upon you, is but like a morning cloud, that is diſſipated and ſcattered, and doth no good to you, you are not the better for it. And as the early dew it paſſeth away, *i. e. Gratiam & miſericordiam meam malitia veſtra abſorbetis:* You ſoon wear off the impreſſions of my mercy, as the moiſtnings of the early dew are ſoon dryed up by the earth; therefore *v.* 7. *I have hewed them by the Prophets, my judgments are broken out upon them:* or otherwiſe, The tokens of my mercy make but ſhort impreſſion on you:

you; your goodneſs fades away, you ſoon return to ſin: what now ſhall I do to you? I am reſolved to try no more mercies; I have made you grow with my kindneſs like flouriſhing Trees, now will I hew you down; becauſe you are ſo unprofitable, I will be unmerciful to you.

Here it will not be amiſs to conſider, how this perſiſtence in ſin after deliverance, promotes and haſtens the deſtruction of a people.

1. Hereby that peculiar reſpect that God hath for one people above another, is made to ceaſe; and they are lookt upon no otherwiſe, than the vileſt of people in the world. In Gods providential diſpenſations, he bears ſome ſingular favour to ſome, beyond what he doth to others, although theſe may be nothing more deſerving than other Nations; and from this favour he confers ſingular Temporal Bleſſings upon them; and theſe he calls his people, as eſpecially cared for, preſerved and provided for by him. But if theſe deſpiſe his kindneſs, and contemn his goodneſs, he then un-peoples them, and caſts them out of his favour; and then they become as liable to judgments, as the greateſt abjects in the

world. Thus was it with the people of the *Jews*, the Lord ſeparated them from all the world for his care and charge: hence he did mighty things for them; but continuing long in their ſins, notwithſtanding his mercies, *Hoſ.* 2. 9. he bids the Prophet tell them, *Ye are not my people, I will not be your God*; and this rejection made way for that ruine now upon them. In the 9th of *Amos*, the Prophet is threatning judgment againſt that ſinful people, againſt which they fortified themſelves with preſumptuous boaſtings of their being Gods people, choſen by him, & ſo often owned by deliverances; but for their abuſing mercies, God tells them, *v.* 7. *Are ye not as the children of the* Æthiopians *unto me? ſaith the Lord*, i. e. *Non pluris vos facio quam Æthiopes*, *Grot.* You are now no more to me than the vileſt people.

You have been under my care, and now ye are under my curſe: ye remain unchangeable in your ſins, as the *Æthiopians* in their colour, and therefore ye ſhall be of no more account with me than they. VVhat though we have been more to God than any people on earth, and received more bleſſings then any Nation

near

near us, insomuch that we might be called his chosen people for his care over us? Will not despising mercies, sinning after deliverances, make him say, as *Hos. 9. 15. I will love you no more?* What shall we be more to him than the *Æthiopians*, if we be like them in sin? *Ezek. 15. 2. What is the Vine-tree more than another? i. e.* If the Vine bring forth no fruit, what is it more than another tree? why should it not be burnt? Whatever we have been, if we be fruitless and ungrateful, why should we not be punisht? If we be not bearing trees, may not God make us burning trees? If we be not bettered by deliverance, why may we not be destroyed?

2. Hereby the Lord is made in a manner to repent of delivering a people: when men have gratified their fellow-creatures with signal favours, and after such expressions of respect have nothing but ungrateful returns; it makes them wish they had never bestowed their love on such unworthy persons. Thus the Almighty God, unjustly requited for mercies, is said to repent him of his conferring kindness on a people. But we must observe that golden rule; *Quæ ἀνθρωποπαθῶς Deo*

tribuuntur, θεοπρεπῶς *debent intelligi* : Thoſe things which are attributed to God after the manner of men, muſt be underſtood as become the Majeſty of God. So Gods repenting is an improper alluſive term, expreſſing not a change in Gods mind, but in his action : not implying ſuch an affection in God as repentance, but alluding to the effect of ſuch an affection in man, *Gen. 6. 6. It repented God that he made man, and it grieved him to the heart.* This implies Gods wrathful indignation at mans miſcarriage, but no diſturbing alteration in the mind of God, who is ever the ſame. But to ſpeak after the manner of Men, when a people continue in ſins after deliverance, God may ſay, Oh! it repents me that I have delivered a people thus to diſhonour me; it repents me to do ſo much for a people, to do thus much againſt me. Oh! how near are ſuch a people to deſtruction, of whoſe deliverance God repents him! How ſoon will they be involved in ruine, of whom God may be provoked to ſay, as *David* of *Nabal*, 1 *Sam.* 25. 21. *In vain have I kept all this man hath in the wilderneſs*; In vain have I preſerved the lives and liberties of this people, ſince the

the fruit of all is onely to be rebelled against and dishonoured by them. If we thus make the Lord griev'd at the heart for bestowing mercies, God will grieve us to the heart by destroying judgments.

3. Hereby God is provoked to stop all proceedings in way of deliverance, and leave a people to successless shiftings for themselves: *Judges* 10. 12, 13. *Did I not deliver you from the* Egyptians, *and from the* Amorites? *yet ye have forsaken me; I will deliver you no more.* Sinning after deliverance, dis-engages God from appearing any more for us. And what can be more dreadful, than to hear God say in his wrath, Oh ye ingrateful people! I have once and again improved my wisdom and power on your behalf, to prevent your ruine; but since ye go on still to provoke me, whatever your condition is hereafter, you must never look for help from me; whoever be your enemy, you must not look for me to be your friend: I will never stand up for such Rebels, nor dishonour my Name in delivering you to sin against me. We cannot want comfort whilst under promises of Divine assistance, and help from Heaven in our dangers;

but if God ſtands off, we muſt inevitably fall into the hands of our enemies, and become preys to their greedy luſts. If God ſays I will add no more deliverance, there is none can promiſe deliverance to us. Oh miſerable people, whom God thus forſakes in anger! we ſhall never ſee another deliverance, if the Lord ſhould reſolve I will add no more. We ſhall never out-live the dangers we daily live in, if God ſhould determine to leave us to them.

Corruption in our ways under mercies, will cauſe a ceſſation of them. So it was with the people of the *Jews*, *Hoſ.* 1. 6. *Call her name* (Lo-ruchamah, *for I will not add any more to the houſe of* Iſrael, *but I will utterly take away.* I will add no more days of proſperity, years of plenty; no more gracious deliverances, or pledges of mercy, but I will utterly take away: I have been filling, but now will I empty you; the *Hebr.* נשא אשא ſignifies *oblivi ſcendo, oblivi ſcor*, in forgetting I will forget them. I will no more be favourable to them, but forgetful of them; though they periſh, I wo'nt remember them; they have not minded my mercies, I will not mind their miſeries. Thus God puts a ſtop to the

the ſtreams of mercy, locks up the ſtore-houſe of bleſſings, and adds no more. *David* prays, *Pſal.* 36. 10. *Oh continue thy loving kindneſs*, &c. *Hebr.* ſignifies, *Pertraha*, draw out, lengthen out the tokens of thy love; but this will be onely to thoſe that are drawn to God by them. They may call every mercy a *Joſeph*, which ſignifies, God will add more. But 'tis not ſo with ungrateful ſinners, God will make an end of beſtowing mercies, unleſs they make an end of abuſing of them: God will ceaſe deliverances, unleſs we ceaſe diſhonouring him with them.

Yea, although a deliverance may be begun to a people, whereby they appear in a happy way to eſcape; yet perſiſting in ſin, God will carry on the work no farther, but leave them to ruine. Hence then, what eſpecial care ſhould be uſed to reform our lives, and renew our repentance, leſt our deliverance ſhould be left unperfected? we are in no better capacity to finiſh it now begun, than we were to begin it, if God ſtands off. Our proceeding in ſin, will hinder our God from proceeding in mercy. Indulging our provoking luſts, will endanger our precious lives. Theſe merciful buddings of Pro-

vidence may eaſily be knipt. This ſmall glimmering light may ſoon be over-clouded; our door of hope may ſoon be ſhut. Shall we provoke a gracious God to ſay, I will add no more? Shall we make him complain of being weary of delivering? What makes a ſtop to our deliverance, but our continuance in ſin? This makes God in the poſture we read of, *Jer.* 14.9. *As a man aſtonied, as a mighty man that cannot ſave. Hebr.* נדהם *Pavidus*, as one afraid of us, aſtoniſh'd at our iniquities. A man aſtoniſht doth walk up and down this way and that way, knows not what courſe to take; ſo our ſinning whilſt God is delivering, makes God at a loſs what to do. Sometimes he goes forward with deliverance, ſometimes it ſeems to ſtand ſtill, another while it looks as if it were ſet back; and all this, becauſe we amaze God with our daring ſins. God told the people of *Iſrael*, admiring he went not on with deliverance, *Iſa.* 59. 1, 2. *My hand is not ſhortned that it cannot ſave, nor my ear deafned that it cannot hear; but your iniquities ſeparate between you and your God*, &c. We drive God from us by our ſins; and how then can our Salvation be carryed on? Shall we make God go back

and

and repent of the good he hath ſeemed to deſign for us? our ſinning will do it: *Jer.* 18. 10. *If it doth evil in my ſight, I will repent of the good wherewith I ſaid I will benefit it.* Shall we not repent of ſinning, rather than provoke God thus to repent of his purpoſe to deliver? Why will you blaſt all your hopes of eſcape, and wither that flower that's ſpringing up? Oh then, if you deſire a farther deliverance, deſert your former ſins! or elſe God will reſolve to add no more. By this moſt abominable perſiſtence in ſin, the Lord is provoked not onely to ſtop deliverances, but to ſtep into ways of judgments, and that with unalterable reſolutions to deſtroy. Inſtead of enabling people againſt enemies, he enables enemies againſt them. Inſtead of delivering from cruel adverſaries, he juſtly delivers them up unto them. Hereby his ſaving arm becomes a ſmiting hand, and mercy it ſelf is made an enemy. Hereby our greateſt friend becomes an implacable foe; and whereas oftentimes before he had graciouſly ſent Commiſſions from Heaven for deliverance, now in his wrath he diſpenſeth commands, and iſſues out Writs to deſtroy.

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This severity to a sinful people you may see, *Isa.* 63. 9, 10. *In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; but they rebelled and vext his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them.* Now how can they hope to escape, that have a victorious God to oppose them! How miserably will those be ruin'd, that by despising Gods helping pitty, convert it to destroying enmity? Oh, that the terrour of Divine displeasure for such transgressions, thus exemplified in others, might have that suitable influence on our hearts, as to prevent them in us! let others corrections be our admonitions; let Gods vindictive judgments on others, be instructive warnings to us: *Rev.* 15. 4. *Who will not fear thee, thy judgments are made manifest!* Let others confusion be a subject of our consideration; and know, if we continue Enemies to God, after his friendly, fatherly dealings, he will soon become our enemy, and fight against us; then the deepest policy, the highest power can be no security to us.

But that which is the most direful consequence of this horrid sinning, is, that it brings the Eternal God to unmoveable reso-

reſolutions, to accompliſh the deſtruction of ſuch a people. He will not be prevailed with to deliver thoſe, whom his mercies could not prevail with to deſiſt from ſin. If we grow incorrigible under mercies, God will grow inexorable when under judgments. If a deaf ear be turned to God, when by mercies he calls for duty; he will turn a deaf ear to us, when we in miſery invocate his mercy: whatever hopes we may flatter our ſelves withal, we ſhall meet with no help from God, when thus provoked. Although ſuch is the goodneſs of God, that he often repents before he deſtroys; yet ſuch provocations will make him weary of repenting, and reſolve to ruine: *Jer.* 15. 6, 7. *Thou haſt forſaken me, ſaith the Lord, thou haſt gone away backward; therefore will I ſtretch out my hand againſt thee, I am weary of repenting.* I have long indulged you, but I will now ſpare no longer, but avenge your ſins: Some render it, *Laboravi rogans, &c.* I have taken pains intreating you to repent, till I am weary; but now ye that have wearyed me with your ſins, ſhall be wearied with judgments: So *v.* 7. *I will fan them with a fan in the gates*: that is, I will ſcatter them about

as

as the chaff is ſcattered with a fan; *I will bereave them of children, and deſtroy my people, ſith they return not from their ways.* Thus impenitent ſinning brings unavoidable judgments: and Divine vengeance will infallibly purſue ſuch as perſiſt in theſe hainous ſins. No Sanctuary ſhall ſhelter theſe ungrateful wretches from the hands of juſtice; nor ſhall flattering intreaties prevent the ruine of ſuch unrepenting ſinners.

The deſerved judgments that belong to theſe inhumane offenders of mercy, will be threatned with unalterable certainty. Thus you may ſee them denounced againſt an incorrigible people, *Ezech.* 24. 13, 14. *Becauſe I have purged thee and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon you. Becauſe I have purged thee,* q. d. I have endeavoured to perſwade thee, and oblige thee to leave thy filthy ſins: *Verba quæ effectum notant, ſæpe de conatu intelliguntur: Eſtius.* So God is ſaid to do what he requires, deſires, permits, or perſwades to be done. Thus God had been inducing of them to obedience, reducing of them from ſin; but under all, they were unſpeak-

ſpeakably obſtinate; which cauſed theſe deſperate reſolutions in God againſt them. He would make his fury reſt upon them: and their doom is confirmed with the higheſt aſſeverations conceivable, *v.* 14. *I the Lord have ſpoken*, i. e. I that am of undoubted faithfulneſs, and cannot lye; of infinite power, and can execute my pleaſure; I have ſpoken it, *and it ſhall come to paſs*; whatever evaſions you think to make, however ſecure and careleſs you are, it ſhall come to paſs, and I will do it. I will undertake the ruine of ſuch as rebel againſt my mercies, and abuſe the greateſt inſtrument of raiſing my honour, *viz.* my patience; *I will not go back, neither will I ſpare or repent.* When I begin, I will carry on my work; I will not break off my judgments, ſince ye will not break off your ſins; the ſentence is irrevocable, you muſt expect no reverſion of it, nor deliverance from it. Now ſurely vengeance threatned with thus much certainty, will fall upon a people with intolerable ſeverity. When judgments are thus punctually determined, it cannot be expected they ſhould be a long while delay'd. What hopes now can we have, if perſiſting in ſin after our many merciful eſcapes? Will

not

not this grave-ſtone be laid upon us? Will not a conſumption be decreed from the Lord of Hoſts againſt us? What though we are ſpared this once, after all our former evaſions? Are we now out of danger? Are there no inſtances to be found of a people preſerved, delivered, as often as we, and at laſt the Writs of deſtruction were iſſued forth? What think you of that example, *Amos* 7. In the viſion of the Prophet, the judgments of God on that people were ſhadowed by various deſtructive things: *v.* 1. by *Graſs-hoppers*, meaning the Army of the *Aſſyrians*, which were ready to invade them; but God from his infinite clemency prevented their ruine by them: *v.* 3. The *Lord repented for this, and ſaid, It ſhall not be*: V. 4. this people are threatned with another conſuming judgment expreſt *by fire*: whereby was ſignified either a drought, or the devaſtations of their Cities, by that unmerciful enemy and Element; or the ruining calamities which they were near involved in by *Teglathphalaſar*; yet now again he delivers them: *v.* 6. This alſo ſhall not be. But this Language is too good to hold always to unbettered ſinners: now therefore, *v.* 7. God will wink

no

no longer at their ungrateful ſinning, he now is weary of repenting. The Lord *ſtood upon a wall with a plumb-line in his hand:* A Metaphor from thoſe *that build walls*, they uſe a line to proceed exactly. Thus the Lord declares he would no longer tolerate their abuſes, nor uſe his clemency to deliver, but would exerciſe ſtricteſt juſtice till they were ruined: Hence *v.* 8, 9. a miſerable deſtruction is threatned, *I will paſs by them no more, &c.* Enemies ſhall now prevail, judgments ſhall effectually take place; I will uſe nothing but ſtrictneſs and ſeverity. Now this leads me to the fifth Propoſition.

PROPOSITION 5.

Deſtruction for ſinning after deliverance, will be the moſt dreadful deſtruction: what can be more clear than this, from the words of my Text? *Should we again break thy commands, wouldſt thou not be angry with us till thou hadſt conſumed us, ſo that there ſhould be no remnant nor eſcaping?* That is, no common calamity would then fall upon us; no ordinary puniſhment would be our portion; but we exceeding

ceeding the common measure and degree of sin, thou wouldst exceed the common degree of judgment: *E dulcissimo vino acerrimum fit acetum*; The sweetest wines make sowrest vinegar; the strongest perfumes are fatal as poysons; abused mercy will be avenged with unusual miseries. No mercy is to be expected in judgment, when mercies are despised that kept off judgments. Kindness not effecting an answerable reformation, will abundantly aggravate revengeful destruction: *Isaiah* 29. 1, 2. God threatens *Ariel*, *sc. Jerusalem*, that wonderful distress should fall upon it; and it should be to him as *Ariel*. *Ariel* was the Altar for whole-burnt offerings, *Ezech.* 43. 15. Now to avenge their abuses of mercies there, God would make their City, once the richest of their mercies, an Altar on which their blood should be offered as a sacrifice to justice. Thus our mercies abused, may become knives to open our throats; our Cities and Towns so often delivered, may be as Altars, about which our lifeless bodies may be heaped as sacrifices about the Altar. The quintessence of all judgments, the substance of all Plagues, shall be mingled in one cup, with all the dregs of

wrath

wrath, for the deſpiſers of clemency and mercy. Mercy is ſweet that is extended to us in midſt of judgments; and judgments ſevere, when executed on a people abounding with mercies. A deliverance cannot bring ſo great mercies, but ſinning after it will uſher in as dreadful judgments. By how much the greater the deliverance is we receive, ſo much the greater will be the deſtruction for ſinning after it. A thick cloud hath been over our heads, and the favourable gale of mercy hath partly diſperſt it; but the aſcending of ſinful vapours will cauſe the Lord to return our ſins upon our heads, with overwhelming inundations of judgments; ſlighting the gales of mercy, preventing ruine, will bring moſt dreadful ſtorms of vengeance. Our float of goodneſs may be turned into floods of miſery. Our ſun may ſet at noon-day; and our ciſterns, now fill'd from the boundleſs ocean of unmerited benignity, may ſoon be filled from the vials of wrath, with the waters of *Marah*. Our deſtruction adjourned a while, may return with unexemplify'd terrour. The Lord threatned the backſliding *Jews*, *Deut.* 4. 25, 26. That if after his kindneſs in conducting them from

Egyptian

Egyptian ſlavery, with infinite mercies through a tireſome wilderneſs, to the bleſſed land of *Canaan*; (I ſay) if then they ſhould ſin againſt him, although they *had remained a long time there, they ſhould not prolong their days upon it, but utterly be deſtroyed from off it.* Thus notwithſtanding our ſinful Nation hath many years been like an *Eden*, a Palace of Royal glory, a *Canaan* flowing with milk and honey, a Theatre of mercies, an unparalleld monument of many deliverances; yet continuing in ſin, will deface its envyed glory, and render it a ſtage for deſtroying judgments, and lay it waſte with ſtorms of ſucceſſive plagues; and then it ſhall be ſaid, This is the Nation that would never leave ſinning, till it forced the Almighty to make it a ruinous heap, a Land deſolate and not inhabited. What high time is it then to depart from ſin, leſt an *Ichabod* be wrote upon us! which ſignifies, Their glory is departed.

With what terrour may we look on thoſe words? *Pſalm* 68. 20, 21. *Unto God belongs ſalvation, but he will wound the hairy ſcalp of every one that goes on in ſin*: Though he will multiply ſalvations to ſuch as ſerve him the more for them, yet will

will he glorifie his juſtice in deſtroying ſuch as go on in ſin after them. The *Hebr.* word יִמְחַץ ſignifies *altè imprimere*; God will make a deep impreſſion of the hands of juſtice on all ſuch incorrigible perſons. The heavieſt judgments will fall on the contemners of the higheſt mercies. Judgment will be with moſt amazing terrour, on the contemners of the Almighties favour. As Gods reſolutions againſt ſuch ſins will make deſtruction irrevocable, ſo his wrath backt with unlimited power, will make them intolerable.

Now here I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you for what reaſons deſtroying judgments will be thus heightned by provoking ſins after deliverance.

1. Becauſe the longer judgments are coming, the greater ſeverity they are attended with, when falling upon us. The longer a blow is fetching, the deeper impreſſion is made by its force. If God tarries long before he puniſhes, the greater terrour will be in his puniſhment. The deſtruction of the old world was delayed for many years, but at laſt it was accompliſht with the greater ſeverity. *Deus tardus eſt ad iram, ſed tarditatem vindictæ gravitate compenſat.* Whilſt ſinners ruine is de-

deferr'd, God is putting himſelf into poſtures of judgment, whetting his glittering ſword, ſharpning his terrible arrows feathered with our ſins, that ſo he may make the more ſharp and ſudden deſtruction. There is *Crudelitas parcens*, ſparing cruelty, as well as *miſericordia puniens*, puniſhing mercy.

The longer the cloud is gathering, the more dripping ſhowre is expected when it falls. So the greater provocations are treaſur'd up in the days of Gods patience, the more miſerable deſtruction will be in the days of his vengeance: *Iſa.* 42. 14. *A long time have I held my peace; I have been ſtill and refrained my ſelf; now will I cry like a travailing woman, I will deſtroy and devour at once.* You ſhall know I have not loſt my power, though I have exerciſed my patience; though you have ſhared ſo much in my mercy, I will at length proportion the ſeverity of my juſtice, to the clemency of my mercy. I will deſtroy you at once; I'll give no more alaruming warnings, awakening calls, or monitory afflictions; but now will I bring ruine on a ſudden, with unavoidable calamities: *Job* 21.31. *The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction*; there will

will be a murdering day for rebellious malignants, they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath. The *Hebr.* יבל we Tranſlate *brought forth*, ſignifies, *Cum mora & pompa deducere*, Mer. *To lead them to it with delay*, to bring them to it by degrees, and alſo with ſome pomp and ſplendour: but what is it they ſhall be brought forth to? What are they going to with their pomp and glory? oh 'tis but to a day of wrath; *ad diem furorum, a day of wraths and fury*; a day *majorum pœnarum*, *of greater puniſhment*. When the wrath of God for every ſin ſhall conſume them, and increaſe their deferrred torments. Sinners are brisk becauſe judgment is delayed; but alas, ſinners, though you go on with ſecurity, yet far from ſafety, the day of wraths will come. *Jer.* 12. 1. we read the wicked proſper; why are they not ſtopt in their courſes? *They take root*, *Hebr. pergunt*, they go on: *Non poſuit Deus prohibitionem: Vatab.* God doth not hinder them; are they happy therefore? will this always continue? No, *v.* 3. *They ſhall be pulled out like ſheep to the ſlaughter, they are ſet apart for the day of deſtruction.* When a day is ſet apart, ſome eminent thing is intended in it. When a day is

ſet

ſet apart for deſtruction, an eminent deſtruction is implyed by it: a day is coming when ſinners ſhall feel the ſmart of Divine vengeance for abuſes of patience. This is call'd *their day*, as deſerved by them, as peculiar to them: *Pſal.* 37. 10. *The Lord knows their day is coming*: *Chald. dies calamitatis ejus*: The day of his ſignal and dreadful calamity is approaching; and the longer this day is coming, the more horrible it will be. As eternal condemnation will be nothing the leſs for a preſent reprieve upon earth; ſo temporal deſtruction will be nothing the more tolerable, for a patient toleration and continued delay before it comes. We are little aware what is coming upon us, now our dangers are a little over; but whilſt we are inſenſibly ſinning after the expreſſions of unmerited favour, the bottles of wrath are filling, and the clouds of vengeance gathering; and who knows but ſuddenly they may eaſe and unburden themſelves in a deluge of ruine upon us an undaunted people? Will not the puniſhment of ſins continued againſt light and love, diſtreſs and deliverance, ſo many years as we have enjoyed them, be of that nature that might make our hearts

hearts tremble to conceive it? will not the vials of wrath be unſpeakably full, and the ſtorm of vengeance moſt horrible, which hath been ſo long in gathering? Sinning after deliverance, renders the deſtruction dreadful, as they make it in a peculiar manner our own. Now deſtruction lyes at our own door, and our ſelves onely are to bear the blame of it. In mercy God begins firſt, but in miſeries we make the beginning. And what can be a more dreadful aggravation, than to have cauſe to ſay, Mercies are gone, God is departed, Enemies prevail? and what may we thank but our pride and profaneneſs, our ingratitude and ungodlineſs, after obliging mercies? what makes up the endleſs and intolerable torments of damned Souls, for ever baniſht from the comfortable preſence of the excellent glory, but this, that all that miſery was procured by themſelves? 'Tis obſerved of ſome Birds, that the lime is made of their own dung that is uſed to deſtroy them: The lime-twigs of Gods judgments, are made of the dung of our own ſins. Our ſins are the feathers, whereby the fatal darts of judgments fly unto us. *Propriis conficimur alis*, wounded with

our own weapons, with Arrows made from our ſelves: we do ill unjuſtly, and then ſuffer ill deſervedly. All the judgments that ſpring up, are but from ſeeds of our own ſowing. The Garment is ruin'd by the Moth bred in it, and we by enemies of our own breeding. It was great aggravation to the miſery of the *Jews*, that God told them, *Jer.* 4. 18. *Thy way and thy doings have procured theſe things unto thee. I have delivered you, reſcued you from miſeries*, and theſe now coming on you, you pull down upon your ſelves. *This is thy wickedneſs*; lay it not to enemies power, think not me unrighteous; this is all thy own. How miſerable a condition is this, to have no other comfort in calamities than this, to have God tell us this is our own? How ſad when diſtreſſed to think, this is my ſlighting of mercy, my abuſing patience, my perſiſtence in drunkenneſs, Sabbath-breaking, when I was delivered! Oh that I ſhould be ſuch an enemy to God and my ſelf! Oh that I ſhould bring ſuch miſeries on my ſelf, by deſpiſing mercies! Nothing makes the condition of a people more hopeleſs, than their bringing themſelves into a helpleſs condition. *Hoſ.* 13. 9. *Oh* Iſrael, *thou haſt de-*

deſtroyed thy ſelf: Thou wondreſt at thy deſtruction, when it is from thy ſelf. *But in me is thy help.* Learned *Druſius* tranſlates the *Hebr.* כי *alioquin*; that is, *otherwiſe thou hadſt had help from me.* Had enemies ruined thee, I would have relieved thee; but ſince thou haſt involv'd thy ſelf in miſery, thou mayſt expect no mercy from me. I will not be the author of deliverance to them, that are ſo wilfully authors of deſtruction to themſelves: you ſhall periſh in the evils of your own procuring.

3. Deſtruction now will be greatly aggravated, becauſe a people thus ſinning, deſerve to be expoſed to the naked fury of incenſed juſtice, without the leaſt mitigation of their miſeries by the interpoſing of abuſed mercy. If we with ungrateful carriages contemn the help of mercy, we juſtly deſerve to be utterly forſaken and caſt off by it. And now, oh how dreadful will it be to drink the cup of Gods deſtroying fury, without any mixtures of relieving mercy! If mercy it ſelf delivers us up to the cruel hands of inexorable juſtice, what then ſhall we experience, but vengeance without clemency, puniſhment without pity, and

deſtruction without delay? Oh how ſad will it be for helpleſs creatures to lye under the diſplays of vengeance, and none to cover them? to have innumerable iniquities crying for judgments, and none to plead for them? to have invincible enemies oppoſing of them, and none to aſſiſt them? If mercy be diſ-engaged, however fiercely the ſtorms of wrath may be pour'd out upon us, there can be no ſhelter from it. Whatever wounds are made, there will be no ſalve to cure them. If merciful deliverances cannot prevail upon us to reform us, will not mercy ceaſe pleading for us? will it not ſay as Chriſt, *John* 17. 9. *I pray not for them?* I will put in no more intreaties for their ſalvation: Juſtice, take them, deſtroy them, ruine them, I have nothing to plead for them. How often doth mercy plead, as the merciful Vine-dreſſer did for the cumber-ground fig-tree, *Luke* 13. 7, 8. *Lord, let it alone this year alſo*: let not thy wrath yet break out, let not thy fury ruine them, but ſpare them this time; try what they will do with one deliverance more? but when nothing is ſucceſsful, mercy gives over; and what but intolerable vengeance will then lye upon us?

But

But who can ſpeak the dread of deſtruction, that unmixed anger involves a people in? How dreadful will it be to fall into the hands of God, when armed with nothing but deſtroying indignation? How can our hearts endure, or our hands be ſtrong, when all the Attributes of his glorious Majeſty ſhall conſpire together to make us miſerable? When infinite wiſdom ſhall be exerciſed in contriving, and infinite power ſhall be engaged in executing the miſerable deſtruction of a ſinful people, it muſt needs be intolerable.

Here I ſhall take occaſion to ſhew you the miſery of a people, when mercy is diſ-engaged from relieving of them; that ſo we may be fearful of depriving our ſelves of that bleſſed ſuccour we have hitherto enjoyed by it.

1. Mercy diſ-engaged, all miſeries endured are pure wrath. Such miſeries are much of the nature of the Torments of the damned in Hell, whoſe plagues are a cup of vengeance without mixture. The happineſs of Saints in all their ſufferings, conſiſts in enjoying ingredients of love in the bittereſt cup that is mixed out to them: when outward diſtreſſes are moſt unpleaſing to ſenſe, they refreſh themſelves

ſelves with delightful objects, then viſible to the eye of faith: *Pſal.* 94. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts, thy comforts delight my Soul.* But mercie diſ-engag'd, there is no cordial to ſupport us, no ſugar to ſweeten the bittereſt cup enforced upon us: *Ezek.*7.5. *Behold, an evil, an onely evil cometh.* God never ſends judgments alone to ſuch as he favours; but deſigning the utter deſtruction of a people, he mixes a potion of onely fatal poyſons for them: then he ſends an onely evil.

2. Mercy being diſ-engaged, the lowdeſt cries, and moſt importunate prayers that a people can put up, will be denyed and rejected. God will admit no Prayers from ſuch as contemned his former returns of them. The ears of juſtice will only hear the cries of our ſins, to avenge them; 'tis mercy hears the voice of our prayers, to anſwer them; or all the anſwer we ſhall have, will be by terrible things in righteouſneſs. But mercy diſ-engaged, we are deprived of that unſpeakable privledge of Audience with God; and then we may ſwelter in our miſeries, roll in our blood, deſpair in our torments, without a redreſs.

Should

Should we by our impudent continuance in ſin, make mercy our enemy, our moſt urgent cries would prove unſucceſful; and though joyned with floods of tears, would be unprofitable: for this will bring us under the doom of thoſe, *Zech.*7. 13. *Becauſe when I called you would not hearken, therefore alſo when you cry unto me I will not hear.* How juſt a retaliation was this from God, although a moſt dreadful affliction! not to have the merciful ear of God in affliction, is the worſt of afflictions. It is diſmal now to find our hearts ſo ſtrangely ſhut up, as not be able to pour out prayers: but how miſerable then ſhall we be, if when involved in ſinking troubles, God ſhould ſhut out our prayers, & not be prevailed with by them? Oh ruining ſtate, when we in diſtreſs ſhall be crying, Save Lord, or we periſh, and then receive no other return, but, Periſh you may, and periſh you ſhall, for all the help you ſhall have from me. Theſe ſins ſo much overcome his mercy, that our prayers will never overcome his anger. And as it is an argument of the greateſt ſinfulneſs in man, not to pray; ſo of the greateſt anger in God, not to hear prayers. Theſe iniquities are ſo intolera-

ble a ſlighting of him, that he will unmercifully ſlight all we do. Oh what will become of a Nation, when that key which was wont to unlock the Treaſuries of bounty, the ſtore-houſe of bleſſings, can do nothing? when that Embaſſador that was wont to prevail for a gracious Treaty, ſhall be denyed? when that ſucceſsful friend ſhall be denyed admittance to the Court of Heaven? when that omnipotent engine can attract no compaſſions? Whither now ſhall we go, when acceſs is denyed to God? where ſhall we have ſupplies, if our former ſtore-houſe be ſhut up? whither can we turn, when he turneth away our prayers? Will not our furious enemies prevail over us, when our moſt fervent prayers cannot prevail with God? What a ſhaking comminaton was that, *Jer.* 11. 11. *I will bring an evil upon them, they ſhall not eſcape; and though they cry, I will not hearken.* God will take no notice of their cries, who would take no notice of his kindneſs. What can be ſaid worſe to a people than this, I will not hear? If he will not hear, he will not help; if he gives no audience, he will give no aſſiſtance. This ſpeaks the ſum of all evils in one. The root of all miſeries

ſeries lyes here, in Gods not hearing. This effectually ſeals men up for deſtruction. *Ezech.* 8. 18. *I will deal with them in my fury; and though they cry in my ears with a loud voice, I will not hear.* As lazy prayers will not prevail now, ſo the loudeſt Prayer ſhall not prevail then. Thou maiſt then ſpend thy breath, that now thou ſpendeſt worſe, and not ſpeed. Thou maiſt ſtretch out thy hands, and yet receive nothing: but diſengaging Mercy may ſuffer like thoſe, *Iſai.* 1. *When ye ſtretch out your hands, I will hide my eyes; and when ye make many Prayers, I will not hear. Audire Dei eſt concedere, i. e.* I will not grant what you ask. In the days of my Grace ye might have prevail'd, and did not pray, or did it formally; and now in the day of my fury ye may pray, but ſhall not prevail.

Neither can the Prayers of the greateſt Favourites in the Court of Heaven prevail for a people under ſuch circumſtances. Should the deareſt Servants plead with greateſt fervency, they muſt be denied when Mercy is diſengaged, *Jer.* 15. 1. *Though* Moſes *and* Samuel *ſtood before me, my heart could not be towards this people.* Standing is the Poſture of Praying. Though theſe ſhould endeavour to draw

out my Affections to them by their importunate cries, yet they ſhould never gain my heart: I cannot love them, I cannot yield it to them. *Tantum mediocriter malis ob pios interdum parcitur, non ita contumaciter flagitioſis.* God only ſpares thoſe that are indifferently wicked for the ſake of the godly, not thoſe that are obſtinately flagitious and ungodly. Ezech. 14. *Though* Noah, Daniel, *and* Job were here, *&c. they ſhould prevail only for their own Souls.* Oh, ſays God, you think the cries of your Prayer ſhall drown the voice of your Sins; you imagine your earneſt calls will make my bowels yearn to you; or if you cannot prevail alone, you will engage others: but I tell you, neither ye, nor my greateſt friends that can moſt prevail, ſhall perſwade me to ſpare ſo ungodly a people as you; they and you ſhall not effect your deſires with me ſo.

3. Mercy diſengag'd, the wrathful blows of Divine Vengeance will be (to ſpeak after the manner of men) inflicted in a careleſs manner on a Mercy-contemning people. The Vine-dreſſer is moſt exact and curious in abſcinding the luxuriant branches of a fruitful Vine, but hacks and hews the unfruitful tree in a care-

careleſs manner. Thus the Almighty God meaſures out and limits the Judgments that are out of Mercy to a fruitful people, to increaſe their fruit; but regards not how he ſtrikes a barren generation, that are only to be hewed down as cumber-ground trees. Whilſt tender Affections remain in the heart of God to a people, he limits the proceeding of enemies, he reſtrains the rage of their foes; he afflicts *pondere & menſura*, with weight and meaſure: But when Juſtice only is exerciſed in Judgment, the worſt of times, the moſt fierce enemies, the moſt aſtoniſhing manner is choſen in afflicting. When we are regardleſs of a mans life, we ſay, Let him eat, drink, do what he will, I will be no hinderance to him: Thus Mercy diſobliged ſays, Let enemies wound, maſſacre, ſlay whom and how they will, I ſhall not help, I will not hinder. God permits enemies to do their worſt, to go as far as they can, when he deſigns the ruine of a people. The Prophet prays, Jer. 10. 24. *Lord, correct me, but with judgment, not in thine anger, leſt thou bring me to nothing.* In thy correction uſe moderation, for the anguiſh of thy anger is intolerable; the blows of thy wrath alone will bring us to nothing.

nothing. The fatherly Anger of God is dreadful, but the fierceneſs of his Anger is fatal. If God doth not moderate his anger, we can never ſuſtain the dreadful terrour of it.

4. Mercy diſengag'd, we become under a total impoſſibility of receiving help from any means. If Mercy that ſhould ſtop miſeries be taken away, miſeries muſt needs flow in. Whither ſhall the poor creature go, if Mercy be gone? If we reſort to creatures for help, they all ſay, It is not in me: If God affords you no help, I cannot; if God withdraws his merciful influence, I have no efficacy. Pſal. 3. 8. *Salvation belongs to God.* 'Tis the honour of God, that he can eaſily ſave without any elſe, and that none elſe can ſave without him. However ſuitable means may be to relieve us, unleſs there be the harmonious conjunction of God with them, they prove ineffectual. Creatures can never help us in diſtreſs, if Mercy ſtands off. There is a counterpoiſing power to the ability of created agents, that may obſtruct their ſucceſs: there are unſeen circumſtances that may invalidate their attempts: there are intercurrent Cauſes, and unprovided-for Accidents, that may be unconquerable hinde-

hinderances to their endeavours. The moſt ſuitable inſtruments *voluntatem habent, non poteſtatem*, have only an impotent Velleity or Will, but no effectual Ability to help us. A Nation deſerted by Mercy, is like a diſeaſed, dying man, Head aking, Heart fainting, Wits confounded, Spirits conſumed, given over by Phyſicians, Friends ſtand behind the Curtains ſobbing and ſighing, weeping and bewailing; willing to relieve, not able. Thus 'tis with a Nation when Mercy is diſengag'd, 'tis bleeding to Death, gaſping for Life, its Friends dejected, their Hearts melted; but dye it muſt, dye it will, none can help it. Let men be never ſo ſollicitous, moſt unſpeakably induſtrious to help a periſhing Nation, they will be ſucceſsleſs without mercy, for they are but *media deferentia, non operantia*, means of conveyance, not of efficience.

Mercy diſengag'd, there can be no binding the hands of Juſtice, no obſtructing its fatal Blows, no ſtopping the floods of Vengeance, no perſwading to ſpare, no prevailing to ſtay, no hindering its arreſts, no oppoſing its violence; but deſtruction will be unavoidable. The higheſt profeſſion, the richeſt poſſeſſions, the

the ſtrongeſt fortifications, will be no ſecurity; no ſhelter on earth, can ſecure from the vengeance of Heaven. The united forces of all Creatures, can no ways impede the actings of their Sovereign Creator. Job 9. 12, 13. *He taketh away, and none can hinder him. If God will not withhold his anger, the proud helpers muſt ſtoop under.* However great the Patrons of our Cauſe may be, whatever Allies may conſociate with us, whatever Aſſiſtants ſhall appear for us, yet they can never proſper to protect us, or ſucceed to deliver us from the hands of reſolved Juſtice. Our helpers muſt have the aſſiſtance of God, or they cannot procure deliverance for us. Had we thouſands as ſtrong as that world-bearing *Atlas*, they could never uphold us: had we a world of Confederates, they could never preſerve us, if Juſtice deſigns our ruine. The moſt potent Friends can never deliver thoſe, who have the Omnipotent God to be their enemy. If Mercy will not help us, we muſt needs be helpleſs. Job 27. 22. *God ſhall caſt upon him, and not ſpare; he would flee out of his hands. Fugere conabitur, ſed non effugiet.* He ſhall ſtrive to get out of his hands, but ſhall not eſcape.

Nei-

Neither Policy, Power, or Prayer, can prevail with, or ſucceed againſt God, when not ſeconded with the aid of Mercy. Dan. 4. 35. *There is none can ſtay his hand.* None can deliver from the deſtroying hands of Juſtice, but victorious Mercy. What need then is there to be careful, that we diſoblige not Mercy? What grateful carriage ſhould we have under Mercies, leſt we make them our enemies? And if Mercy be once againſt us, all things will work againſt us.

5. Deſtruction after Deliverance will be exceedingly aggravated by that ſelf-confounding deſperation that will be in our Souls, when God ſhall come out againſt us to vindicate the quarrel of abuſed mercies, to avenge the contempt of former deliverances. Then we ſhall not only have God againſt us, but Conſcience alſo will direfully torment us: the reflecting on former deliverances, will cauſe as great terrour as preſent dangers. The very thoughts of contemn'd deliverances, will damp and deſtroy the confidence of the Soul in renewed Miſeries. How can a man lift up his face before God to deſire a mercy, that hath turn'd his back upon God when he obtain'd a mercy?

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How can he go to God for fresh supplies of Mercy, who getting a mercy, hath gone away from God? When God hath lifted thee up from a low condition, and thou hast gone on in a wicked life, with what face canst thou look upon God again? Canst expect a good look, when thou lookest to him? What canst expect but a denial from him, when thou hast denied obedience to him? Oh how will Conscience fly on thy face, and check thy Soul! Remember when you were in distress before, thou didst cry to God, and he delivered thee; but thou never didst love him the more, serve him the better for it. Then wilt thou imagine with thy self, Oh how can I go to God again! How can I think he will try me with further Mercies, who have been so unfaithful under those I received? How can I expect he will be prevail'd with to prolong my Life, when I have heapt up provocations, after his former prolongations of it? Oh what heart-faintings and failings will a sense of despised Mercy produce! What a Hell of Misery will this be to all thy Torments, that thou durst not approach to God? Will not inward troubles be a dreadful increase of distress

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in times of Judgment? And what inward trouble more heavy than this, to finde our hearts condemning of us, and to be clogg'd with the ſenſe of abuſed Mercies? Wilt thou not fear God will tell thee, thy Prayer is an abomination? Wilt not dread leſt he ſay, as *Jephthah* to the Elders of *Gilead*, after they had expell'd him, Judg. 11.7. *Are ye now come unto me, when ye are in diſtreſs?* What, are you ſo impudent after all your unkindneſs to me, to ſeek kindneſs from me? What, do ye think I will ſhelter ſuch enemies as you? Will not God ſay thus to us, when fleeing to him in diſtreſs? What, do ye that have forſaken me ſo long, flee to me now? Do ye that deſpiſed my former Deliverance, come to me for another? Will not God ſay, Be gone, I'll admit you no more, I'll hearken neither to your Prayers nor Promiſes? And then we may cry out as *Salv. Quid dignius, quid juſtius? non audivimus, non audimur; non reſpeximus, non reſpicimur.* What more merited, what more juſt? We have not heard God, and we are not heard; we have not regarded, and we are not regarded. What confuſion will this fill our faces withal? What a

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Calamity will this be to all our Misery? Oh take heed then of incurring any further displeasure from God, by abusing deliverance; lest when renewed dangers come upon you, thy mouth should be stopt, thy confidence dampt, and thy conscience thus checking of thee. But put Iniquity far from thee, and then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; then shalt thou have access to the Lord in thy troubles: and if destruction should come, thou maist cry for deliverance, and have gracious returns. Destruction for sinning under these circumstances, will be aggravated by that pitiless frame that shall be not only in God, but in man, to those that are involv'd in such deserved destruction. God will not pity, but be strangely hard-hearted to such hardened Sinners. Misery calls for pity; but there can be no pity, where there is no mercy, or where Mercy is disengaged: Ezech. 5.11. *Neither shall my eye spare, neither will I have pity.* He laid aside his tender compassions; his bowels of mercy were shut up, and now he hath no tender affections to them.

Thus men also that may be preserved from our calamities, will have just cause to

to be pitileſs to us. It was ſaid of *Vitellius*, when going to Execution, with his Hands bound, diveſted on Robes, that men had no pity of him, *Nam deformitas vitæ miſericordiam abſtulerat*, Tacitus. The impiety of his Life, had taken away mens pity for his Death. Will not our ſinning after Deliverance give ſuch cauſe of abſtaining from pitying of us? Will not men ſay, They deſerve to be miſerable, that will not deſiſt from being ſinful. Oh dreadful aggravation of miſery, to have all bowels ſhut againſt us! *Extrema eſt miſeria, cùm nemo miſeri vices dolet.* 'Tis extreme miſery, the height of diſtreſs, when we are not only deſtitute of Help, but deſtitute of Pity. Jer. 22.18. *Shall not ſay, Ah, my brother, or ah, my ſiſter: They ſhall not lament for him, ſaying, Ah, Lord, or ah, his glory.*

I ſhall now endeavour to make ſome particular *Uſes* of what hath been ſpoken.

Uſes from the 1. *Propoſ.*

Uſe 1.

Is it the great deſigne of God in delivering

livering a people from imminent dangers, to oblige them to break off ſin? Let then the remarkable Deliverance that the Almighty God in abounding goodneſs hath lately beſtowed upon us, effect this bleſſed change in our lives and converſations. With what face can we trample on the juſt and ſacred Commands of our merciful God, whilſt he ſmiles upon us with ſuch unmerited favours? Can our Hearts be ſo damnably obdurate, ſo inſenſibly hardned, as not to be melted by ſuch an unexpected Deliverance as this? *Should we again break his Commandments?* What pretence can favour ſuch Impieties? What profeſſion can cloak ſuch Wickedneſs? What Allurements can entice us againſt Conſcience, Reaſon, and Religion, to obviate and oppoſe the righteous requeſts and demands of ſuch a patient God?

Should we again return to our Fleſh-pleaſing ſecurity in ſin, the Fountain and Spring of our greateſt miſery? What but our belluine and beſotting ſtupidity involved us in our direful dangers? and ſhall we return to our former poſture, not regarding the rouſing alarums the late diſcoveries of miſery have ſounded to us,

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nor minding the awakening calls to prepare for Judgments, or turn from the Impieties that deserve them? Would not this be an unpardonable crime, and a means most infallibly to ruine us? Should we again dishonour this delivering God, by profane, licentious courses? filling our Land with the hateful noise of our crying Iniquities, when God hath fill'd it with the blessed sounds of unspeakable Mercies? What an unworthy, ungrateful, unanswerable carriage would this be deem'd by all that bear the title of Christians?

Would Heathens offer to do such things to their feigned Gods, or offer such affronts unto them, could they but do such favours for them? And shall we, to affront the Majesty of Heaven, belch out abominable Oaths, and account them as pleasing Ornaments of Language? Shall we shew our despite to our God, by blasphemous Expressions against inviolable Truths concerning the nature and being of God? Shall we, to express how little we value his kindness, provoke the eyes of his Glory by Noon-day Drunkenness, Rioting, and Debaucheries? Shall we witness a cursed contemning of him by impu-

impudent profanations of his holy Sabbaths, as before we have done? Shall not his Kindneſs courting us to amendment, prevail? Shall not his Goodneſs endeavouring our betterment, operate upon us? Is it not impoſſible to be ſo wicked, after ſuch wonderful expreſſions of Love?

Should we again with greedy minds purſue the periſhing enjoyments of this alluring world, neglecting the profitable exerciſes of Religion, and required Devotion? Did the Almighty prolong our expiring Lives, to ſpend them thus? With what conſcience can we allow our ſelves thoſe large diſpenſations from holy Duties, for the ſake of our worldly employments, after we are purpoſely deliver'd, to augment and increaſe our deſerved Obedience? Will not our days be yet ſhortned, if we remain ſo ſtraitned in Duties ſtill? And if we cannot ſpare a little of our ſtrength to work for God, can we think that God will improve his mighty ſtrength, to work out any further Salvation for us? If our houſes that might have been without People, ſtill remain without Prayer, may we not expect an angry God will ſoon unpeople them?

them? If now we ſhall caſt off Duty, will he not ſuddenly caſt off us?

Should we again be rending and tearing one another by ravenous Oppreſſion? and ruining one another by unhappy Diviſions? Should not this wonderful Love excite ſuch bowels in our ſoftned hearts to one another, that we ſhould no longer be maintaining with unreaſonable rigidneſs one anothers aſſumed Opinions, to the unſpeakable prejudice of Church and State? But rather be ſodering together into a perpetual Harmony, by mutual condeſcenſions and compliances; thereby ending our unprofitable janglings in indiſſolvible Unity. Shall not we, who have partaken of this favour together, live always together in the beauty and glory of undiſſembled Friendſhip, and unfeigned Love? And if this effect ſhall not follow our being delivered together, 'tis to be feared, the effect of ſuch diſorders will be no other than to be deſtroyed and cut off together. Oh then let the Kindneſs of God to us, ſweeten our tempers to one another; and let us be ſo fully united together, that all our Affections may make but one channel of Love, that ſo the God of Love may dwell among

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us. For as this ſincere adherence to one another by Love, would be moſt effectual to prevent the deſigns of enemies againſt us; (who delight to ſee and ſow our Diviſions) ſo it would be ſo grateful an improvement of deliverance, that God would more readily continue it to us. What then remains? But that we ſhould lay aſide Pride and Prejudice, and Self-deſignings; and ſtanding to the compleat and unalterable Rules of Worſhip, and Principles of Religion, laid down in the bleſſed Word, henceforth (I ſay we ſhould) dwell in moſt beautiful Unity, and worſhip our God as far as can be, in a moſt deſirable Uniformity.

Should we again become formal and hypocritical in our ſolemn Worſhip of the great God? Were this a ſuitable return for Gods delivering, to mock him with diſſembling Services, and weary him with heartleſs Offerings? Are Ordinances continued, and the glorious Sunshine of the bleſſed Goſpel preſerv'd unclouded; and ſhall we requite the Lord no otherwiſe, than by profaning and buſing of them?

Oh the price we ſhould ſet, the value we ſhould have of our Ordinances! What

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are these but the Wells of Salvation, the Conduits of Grace, the Ensignes of eternal Glory, the Food of immortal Souls, the Pledges and Models of eternal Loves, the blessed Mounts of Glory; in which are the clearest Resemblances of Heaven, the sweetest Refreshments on Earth, the most lively stamps of Divine Majesty, and the most blessed Appearances and comfortable Visits of Christ? And can we contemn such Enjoyments, without abominable Ingratitude? Are they given to us by a new deliverance? let us shew our esteem by a new improvement. Never be so backward to attend them, so careless under them, so unanswerable to them hereafter. Let God see that his kindness is not lost, his cost is not in vain, but that you endeavour a faithful return to what he doth for you.

But into what a large Field am I entring? Let all sins be reformed, let all holiness be embraced; be universal in reformation of known sins, though I cannot be particular in the enumeration of them; minde every particular duty, though I can name them but universally; let the love of God in delivering, constrain you: And that the deliverance

may have greater influence upon you, I shall lay down before you in a few particulars the greatness of it.

1. The greatness of our deliverance is manifest and apparent from the consideration of the Enemies from whose hands an Almighty power hath rescued us. The managers of the designs for our ruines, are the Race of murdering *Cain*, the bloudy Off-spring of devouring *Cannibals*; whose monstrous cruelties are divulg'd in every corner of the world, recorded in innumerable Histories; experienc'd in many Nations, known in *Germany*, felt in *Paris*, found in *Ireland*; and we are wofully acquainted with them in *England*.

The most barbarous Inhabitants of the world can't parallel their inhumane Massacres: the most desperate wretches in Hell can't exceed their practis'd Cruelties. These Hell-bred Salamanders delight onely in ruining fires; these patrisating Children of the grand Murderer, love no drink like the fulsome liquor of Innocents bloud; these Apostates from humane nature, can solace themselves with no pleasures like the tormenting butcherings of harmless Saints. How cruel

cruel are their tender mercies! how ſavage is their ſweeteſt carriage to thoſe that ſubmit not to that burdenſome yoak that neither we nor our Fathers could bear! What love can anſwer the kindneſs of our God in giving eſcapes from theſe mercileſs Lions, from theſe pictures of malicious Satan, and fire-breathing Dragons of the infernal Pit? Can we do leſs than make our ſelves compleat Holocauſts by the flames of aſcending affections, to our gracious God, who hath delivered us from being Sacrifices to theſe moſt cruel beaſts of prey? Had not theſe men been thus degenerated from merciful Humanity into belluine Ferocity, they could never have attempted the confuſion and ruine of ſuch innocent unmeriting a People as we.

But theſe empty Pretenders to Chriſtianity could never have accompliſh'd their ſincere deſignes of deſtroying us, had they not impudently laid the ground of all this wickedneſs with the Orient colour of ſpecious Religion; and ſo preſerv'd deluded Souls from the diſturbing flaſhes of unſtupifi'd Conſcience. But the Principles of their avowed Religion warranting its Patrons in ſuch Impieties, and

defending ſuch damnable Courſes, hath animated their cruel minds with mighty expectations of renowning Merit by ſuch bloudy Exploits.

Thus they transforming themſelves into Angels of Light, have ſeduced a blinded Multitude, and by this powerful Engine have gain'd innumerable Allies to promote a Deſigne moſt diametrically oppoſite to Reaſon and true Religion. Thus Religion is us'd to deſtroy the Religious; and Policy cloathing it ſelf with the title of Piety, inſinuates unſpeakable Vigour into infatuated Mortals in the purſuit of gainful deſignes through greateſt difficulties. And had not the Almighty diſcountenanced ſuch Religion by blaſting deſignes promoted by it, their Religion had brought our ruine, and the ſhadow of Religion had conſumed the ſubſtance of it. Now what favour have we found with God, that he ſhould diſappoint a Contrivance manag'd by thoſe who had gain'd in ſo many Confederates by the deluding Pretences of Religion? which is alſo to make its ſeduced Zelots do more than the greateſt Allurements imaginable.

Hence were the wonderful incitements

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to that unwearied Induſtry now viſible among them, to confound and deſtroy us. Some drops of their Bloud they could undauntedly part with, that they might drink ſome draughts of ours. What Charges could ſeem too burdenſom to them, to diſcharge the world of ſuch Hereticks as we are accounted by them? How were their Breaſts like threatning Thunder-clouds, whoſe Vapours never leave working till they vent themſelves with amaſing Terrour to the trembling world? How have their Heads, Hearts, and Hands, been willing, contriving, preparing for many years? How have they been, as is ſaid of the Princes of *Iſrael*, Ezek. 22. 6. *Every one to their power to ſhed bloud?* No Harmony, no Help, no Hearts, no Hands, no Power, no Purſe was a long while wanting in attempting this Murdering Atchievement. What greater Deliverance was ever beſtowed on a People than this, when all the Forces of Hell and *Rome* with its Allies, are defeated?

How might I make this appear from the wonderful height of Power they were by all their endeavours arrived at: From the greatneſs of the danger, as moſt wic-

kedly kept ſecret by means of inviolable Obligations and Oaths, which laid thoſe that were conſcious to it, under the greateſt incapacity of revealing of it: From the familiar Converſe our fatal Enemies had among us: From the abominable Engagings of rotten Members to deſtroy the body they belong'd to, and cut off the Head that was over them: From Aſſiſtances forreign Enemies provided and promiſed againſt us! But what hath been ſpoken, ſufficiently ſpeaks the greatneſs of our Deliverance, with reſpect to the perſons contriving our Deſtruction.

2. It appears from the conſideration of that miſerable Deſtruction we were appointed unto, all theſe ſubtile heads and bloudy hands are not at work to accompliſh a petty Deſtruction. Their Throats, enlarg'd as Hell, would never be ſatisfied with Perſonal Revenge; no leſs than a Nation, yea, Nations of Proteſtants, can make up a ſingle Meal for theſe ſavage Bloud-hounds. Theſe tyrannical *Nero's* are for the cutting off the Necks of all Chriſtians at a blow. No leſs Bonefire would ſerve their turns, than the horrid Conflagration of a whole Nation. A *Diocleſian* Perſecution was nothing

thing to this helliſh Enterprize and attempted Deſtruction. How fain would Antichriſt have waded to an uſurped Throne to the neck in the bloud of oppoſing Martyrs!

Had it not been a Deſtruction none like unto it? Had not *Rome* out-done its former Cruelties? Had not this dreadful day been a None-ſuch? Come, and ſee. What ſhould you have ſeen? Had this Deſigne been perfected, you had ſeen or heard, if alive, innumerable Troops of frightful Warriors, fierce in Countenance, more in Carriage, breaking forth, like the Plunderers of *Troy* from that fatal Horſe, from the Bowels of our Land: You had ſeen the diſguiſing Vizards of diſſembling Friends thrown off, and the diſtinguiſhing Mark of the Beaſts company, worn by thouſands of our unſuſpected Inhabitants: You might have ſeen the multitude of profane ones turn Popiſh, and the Neutraliſts become abſolute Papiſts: You might have ſeen an aſtoniſhing Force of forreign Idolaters admitted to enter our Engliſh Coaſts by the treacherous hands of mercenary Subjects: You might have ſeen the horrid Inſtruments of undreaded Death brought from their unſearched

hoards, ready to be prov'd on thy own body. Ah, dreadful day, none like it! When thoſe unthought-of Enemies had ſhewn themſelves in warlike poſtures, arm'd with invincible Power, wing'd with ſpeedy Fury, reſolv'd with undaunted Courage, aſſiſted with large Auxiliaries; what then had been the Work? Come and ſee. Then had the Streets been dy'd with a Sea of Crimſon-bloud, the Channels ran down with the Lives of maſſacred Chriſtians: Then had our bolted doors in nocturnal ſilence been forcibly open'd, and our ſleepy Bodies drag'd from their reſting Beds, and butcher'd by cruel hands: Then had our mangled Carcaſſes been ſtrew'd in our peaceleſs Streets, to be trampled on like dirt by our Foes: Then had our Weapons, prepar'd for our defence, been murdering pieces for our Enemies ſervice: Then had there been ſome fleeing in amaze, ſome fighting in confuſion, ſome turning out of fear, ſome tortur'd for not turning. Oh, black and gloomy day! Then had our ſtately Buildings become a Prey to the fierceſt of Elements, as well as we to the fierceſt of Men: Then had the deſire of our eyes been

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taken away with a blow, we our ſelves not eſcaping: Then had the noiſe of bitter Lamentation, though nothing prevailing, been heard in our Streets; the Shrieks of the wounded piercing our hearts, the ſight of the Dead amazing our ſpirits. Oh, what had they done? Come and ſee. How had the places of ſhelter been places of greateſt dangers! how had it been in vain for unarmed men to oppoſe a furious Crue of well-equipag'd Souldiers! How fruitleſs had it been to flee, when dangers were unknown! How ſad had it been to behold tender Infants rent from the bodies of their rifled Mothers, and caſt into their Flames! Who could have endur'd the ſight of Sucking-babes ſnatch'd from their Mothers breaſts and daſh'd againſt deſtroying ſtones? Who could have ſeen them ſprawling on the tops of Pikes and hurl'd into cruel Flames, without bleeding hearts? Oh the gaſtly viſages of the once moſt beautiful Objects, that then had been mar'd with deforming wounds! Oh what a deliverance is this, to be thus far freed, to be thus long delivered from ſuch a Deſtruction! Oh let this Mercy obtain its deſigne, leſt the things we have feared ſhould come upon us.

3. The greatneſs of this Deliverance will appear on the conſideration of the condition we were in, who were deſign'd to be deſtroyed. Conſider we but the daring provocations we have given the Almighty to forſake us, it appears a Mirrour of Mercy that he ſhould ſpare us. Might he not juſtly have ſaid, Now will I eaſe me of my Adverſaries, and avenge me on my Enemies: Now will I make known the dread of my unregarded wrath, for their impenitent ſinning: Now will I ſhew how bitter a thing it is to abuſe my patience by rebellion, and my goodneſs by offending? But now behold, his bowels wrought in him; he delivered us rebels, reſcued us ſinful wretches: and who can but lay to heart this mercy?

How helpleſs had we been in ſuch a diſmal Surprizal? the mighty men would not have found their hands, the valiant would have loſt their couragious hearts, and we ſhould have been but *Magor miſſabibs*, terrour round about.

But the miſery of our condition had lain in our unreadineſs to have encountred the King of Terrours, to have follow'd that amazing Meſſenger to the dreadful Tribunal of the Eternal God.

How

How unfit had we been to die at a moments warning? How miſerable had thouſands been to whom all ſpace of repenting had been ended, whoſe preſent miſery had been the beginning of eternal torments, whoſe unprepared Souls had been ſent to the place prepar'd for the devil and his angels? Oh then that now we could lay to heart theſe Riches of Grace that continues a preparing ſpace: *Patientia pœnitentiæ expectatrix:* His Patience expects Repentance. Let not our prolonged days be ſpent in provoking him any longer; let us not now be treaſuring up wrath to the day of wrath.

I might ſhew you the greatneſs of this Deliverance, by the nearneſs of the Deſtruction; it was in *articulo mortis*, all was almoſt concluded, our Paſſing-bell rung, the day was preſum'd to be their own, and now delivered, as *Daniel*, *è faucibus perditionis*, from the very jaws of Deſtruction, from the very mouths of our Enemies. Oh wonderful goodneſs!

And moſt fitly might I mention the means of our Deliverance.

Una eadémque manus vulnus opémque ferat.

How

How did this ſweeteſt Honey come from the Lions carcaſs? Men of their own Party muſt impart it to us; thoſe of their own Conclave are means, under God, to deliver us from their own Counſels. Oh the wonderful Authority of God, that wrought on their Conſciences ſo long benum'd! Oh the Wiſdom of God, that works by contrary means! No Violence conſtrained them, but what the Almighty uſed with them; no Policy induced them, ſo much as Divine Power.

Uſe 2.

Is it the deſigne of God in delivering, to reduce from ſin, and oblige to Holineſs? Let us then examine our ſelves, whether we have anſwer'd theſe holy deſigns of our gracious God. Oh Reader, faithfully ask thine own heart, Have I not been as looſe and profane, as vile and vain, as carnal and formal as ever I was before? What inducement hath this gracious preſervation been to the reformation of my Life? What Sin have I faithfully forſaken? what diſpleaſing Luſt have I unfeignedly left? what ſpiritual Obedience have I cloſed withal, ſince I enjoyed this

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unſpeakable Mercy? Doth not thy Conſcience accuſe thee of thy regardleſneſs of it? Doth not thy heart ſmite thee, for not obſerving the Duties thou art oblig'd to by it? *Ahaſuerus* would know what was done to *Mordecai*, for the good deed he had done for the Kingdom. Ask thy ſelf, What good hath been done to God for all the good deeds he hath done for thee? What hath been done to him for his delivering of thee? Haſt thou not ſinned the more againſt him, and turn'd his Grace into wantonneſs? Is that a meet requital for his kindneſs? Are Pride, Drunkenneſs, Senſuality, fit *Votive Tables* for our merciful eſcapes? Oh let not this Mercy be loſt for want of improvement, leſt you never enjoy ſuch another. Remember, *exoneratio ſupplicii eſt oneratio officii*; the laying off and freeing thee from puniſhment, lays obligations upon thee for dutiful Obedience. Mercies are to be like ſhowers on Valleys, making them fruitful; as a grain of corn ſown in the tilled earth, bringing forth a plentiful crop of expected fruit. God hath ſown the ſeeds of his Mercies, let not the Devil reap a crop of Sin. Oh how might I plead with you, as loving *Jonathan* with hard-

hard-hearted *Saul*, 1 Sam. 19. 4. *Let not the King ſin againſt* David, *for he hath not ſinned againſt thee; and becauſe his works are good.* Oh let not us ſin againſt God; let us not rebel againſt him; he never dealt unjuſtly with us, but his deeds are good. He is ever working for us. He is ever heaping up Mercies, ſhall we ſin againſt him? It will be better not to receive a Mercy, than not to be better'd by it. Oh come now and conſider with your ſelves, ſay with thy ſelf, Hath God in his Providence made me a freeman from Popiſh Slavery, and ſhall I make my ſelf a Slave to Luſts, and a Vaſſal to the Devil? Shall God continue my Life, and ſhall I caſt it away as worth nothing? Oh examine your ſelves how you have acted. *Plato*, ſeeing any diſorderly, would ſay, *Num ego talis?* Am I ſuch an one? Thou ſeeſt many go on in ſin, ask thy ſelf, Am not I ſuch an one? Do not I go on in ſin? What a folly is it in us, that we *utimur perſpicillis pluſquam ſpeculis*, uſe ſpectables to ſee other faults, more than looking-glaſſes to ſee our own? Learn the Art of Self-reflection, and that is the way to Self-reformation.

Uſe

Vſe 3.

Is it Gods deſign and deſire to reduce us from ſin by theſe merciful methods? Then let us not fooliſhly cauſe the Lord to uſe more forcible and fearful means, to effect this in us. Let us not force a gracious God out of his delightful ways of Mercy. Why ſhould we make him be doing his works of Judgment, ſince he declares his unwillingneſs to it? Shall we turn his Scepter into a Rod? Shall we drive away thoſe precious Mercies by ſinful courſes, which, with mournful hearts and wringing hands, we ſhall be glad to be recalling? Shall we make our Showers of Mercy end in Flouds of Vengeance? Shall we wreſt the Sword of Juſtice out of the Sheath of Patience, and violently pull down Vengeance on our own heads? Will you tell the Lord, you are weary of his Mercies, and will never regard them? Will you declare in the preſence of God, that if he will not powre out his Vengeance, and diſplay his Juſtice, and make your Plagues wonderful, that you will not fear him, nor break off ſins? Is your ſtrength ſo great

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to ſtand before his Anger, that you are reſolute in provoking of him? Will nothing ſerve your turn but deſtruction, and deſolation, and undoing judgements? You muſt either ceaſe ſinning, or God will ceaſe waiting, and give over favouring of you. God ſpeaks, *Ezech.6.9.* how the Jews *had broken him with their whoriſh heart*; that is, he tells them, they ſhould remember *Eum quaſi objecta quadam violentiâ à propoſito abductum, & invitum planè adductum eſſe eorum perfidia ut interrumperetur curſus miſericordiæ*, Calv. That he was turn'd from his gracious purpoſes, with the violence their ſins offered to him; and that it was by their perfidiouſneſs he was brought to break off the courſe of his mercies. Thus God is broken off from ways of mercy, by our not breaking off our ways of ſin.

The holy God is reſolv'd to make us leave off ſinning one way or other: if his goodneſs cannot gain us, if his mercies cannot induce us, his juſtice will come out againſt us, and by his mighty power he will rule us. Ezek. 20. 33. *As I live, ſaith the Lord, ſurely with a mighty hand, and an out-ſtretched arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you.* God will

will bring us into ſubjection by mercies or judgments; his fury ſhall do that his favour will not. But why ſhould we cauſe the Lord to be ſo ſevere unto us? we weary man, but will ye weary God alſo? Let us be conſtrained to amendment by his love, or elſe he muſt curb us by tormenting puniſhments. It was ſaid of *Iſrael*, Pſal. 81. 11. *Iſrael would have none of me.* Shall it be ſo ſaid of *England*, that we refus'd and ſlighted what God gives, and what he doth in way of mercy? Shall it be ſaid we will have none of his mercies, none of his deliverances? ſhall we not then have his judgments, and feel his vengeance?

Uſe 4.

Is this the deſigne of God in delivering? then wiſely make uſe of this as an Argument to invalidate all future temptations to ſin. When ſinful occaſions offer themſelves unto you, damp the hurtful influence of them by objecting to thy ſelf the unreaſonableneſs of ſinning, after ſuch mercies confer'd upon thee. Thus *Joſeph* did invalidate the eager aſſaults of his wicked Miſtriſs, Gen. 39. 9. *How can*

I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God? He did not raſhly admit the temptation, but conſulted Conſcience, and repel'd it with this weighty Argument: How can I ſin againſt a God that hath of late been ſo favourable to me, hath delivered me from death, and advanced me to honour? Oh I cannot ſlight ſo much kindneſs, to pleaſe a ſinful humour: I will never do it. When then thou meeteſt with allurements to ſin, take to thy ſelf this corroborating diſſwaſive from it, and couragiouſly oppoſe all unworthy motions to Rebellion by pondering on it.

Inferences from the ſecond Propoſition concerning our proneneſs to ſin after Deliverances.

1. Hence we ſee the abſolute Neceſſity that there is of Divine Power, to render any means effectual to bring us from ſin. However probable means may be to effect this end, they are not powerful enough without the cooperation of an Almighty arm ſuperadded to them. If rational Arguments were ſufficient, ſuch as are drawn from infinite Mercy might be enough

enough to charm our Wills to a loyal Obedience to our God; but we ſee that outward Mercies, not conferring inward Grace, cannot accompliſh ſuch difficult work. The chiefeſt engine that draws the heart of man from ſin, is Mercy; but 'tis the arm of God muſt faſten it to the heart of man, and Divine Power that can only attract him by it. Mercies are only cords, which Divine Power uſes to draw men from ſin. If Moral Perſwaſions were ſo wonderfully effectual in converting Sinners, as ſome would have them, it is ſtrange men cannot overcome themſelves to forſake their ſins, by the conſideration of the merciful Preſervations, and gracious Deliverances the Almighty beſtows upon them: Strange it is men cannot be perſwaded to ceaſe provoking God to Judgements, by the declaring his unwillingneſs to them by the experiences of deliverances from them. But how do we experience the ineffectualneſs of outward Mercies, whatever valid motives may be drawn from them! What need then is there to apply our ſelves moſt frequently to the Throne of Grace, for heavenly Influences on earthly Bleſſings?

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How ſhould we earneſtly crave the concurrence of God's Omnipotency, for the bettering of us by the confluence of Mercies beſtowed upon us? *Iſai.* 48. 17. *The Lord teaches to profit.* In the greateſt abundance of Means and Mercies, we ſhall have no profit, without the aids and aſſiſtance of God; He muſt teach us to improve Deliverances, to gain by his Goodneſs. When cords of Mercy are put into our hands, let us lift up our hearts to the Father of Mercies, and cry, Draw us, and we will follow thee. When Mercies are ſown like precious ſeeds moſt plentifully amongſt us, let us implore the ſhowers of Divine Bleſſing to make us fruitful by them. When ſuch invaluable Talents are put into our hands, let us ſeek to the Almighty for ſtrength to work with them. Plead with the Lord to deliver thee from ſin, by his Deliverances; to give thee the incomes of his Grace, to improve thy Life miraculouſly continued to thee. Leave not the Throne of Grace, till Grace is given thee to leave thy ſins: Ceaſe not to importune the Almighties help againſt thy ſins, till he hath delivered thee from them, as he hath done from thine enemies. Acknow-

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iedge thine own weakneſs, and ſo thou wilt engage the ſtrength of God: Tell him with holy boldneſs, that now he hath given thee his Mercies, thou canſt not be content without his Bleſſing with them. Let temporal Deliverance edge thy appetite after ſpiritual and eternal. Thou haſt but half a Mercy, till thy Soul is better'd by a Deliverance, whether it be from Enemies, or Sickneſs, or any other diſtreſs or danger.

2. Are we ſo prone to ſin after Deliverance? Then hence be warned to be very watchful upon the enjoyment of ſuch a Mercy. Oh that we, who enjoy ſo eminent eſcapes from danger, might uſe our greateſt induſtry to prevent our proceeding in ſin! Let us fortifie our ſelves againſt ſuch an evil practice. Make conſcience of what you do in a delivered condition. Let us no longer careleſly run on in our ſins, but ſeriouſly conſider the inducements we have to a holy Life.

Now in order to prevent our proceeding in ſin, admit this ſerious counſel, and obſerve theſe Directions:

1. Make frequent Reflections on the great Deliverance in part beſtowed upon us.

us. When the Creator of the ends of the Earth ſurvey'd his glorious Works, he ſaw they were good, and delighted in them; and he greatly delights that we ſhould be frquent in Meditations of his glorious Works of Creation and Providence, and live in perpetual admirings of them, applauding the ſhines of his Power, Wiſdome, and Mercy in them. The leaſt of Gods Works deſerve the admiration of the greateſt Angel in Heaven. Inconſiderate Perſons gain little advantage by the moſt conſiderable Mercies. Were our hearts more thankful, we ſhould make a particular Computation and exact Chronology of dayly and yearly Mercies. The forgetfulneſs of Mercy is the ground of our forſaking God after them. 'Tis mighty effectual to ballaſt our hearts againſt our impetuous inclinations to ſin, to be much in conſidering what God hath done for us.

Hence the people of *Iſrael* were admoniſhed to be frequent in reviewing their ſad condition in *Egyptian* bondage, with the bleſſed eſcape given them from it. Deut. 26. 1, 2. 5, &c. *When thou art come into the land----thou ſhalt ſpeak and ſay, A Syrian ready to periſh was my father, and*

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he went down into Egypt, and became there a great nation,----and the Egyptians intreated us ill,----and the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and outstretched arm, and with great terribleneſs, &c. Thus they were to make a frequent commemoration of their miſerable ſtate, and merciful eſcape. In like manner it were neceſſary for us to look back on what we lately were, and ſay, A little while ſince I was at the gates of Death, by the ſubtile contrivances of Popiſh Enemies; a little time paſt I had near been devoured by the jaws of thoſe preying Lions: Some few months are paſt ſince the Nation was in danger of being involv'd in incomparable Miſeries; it hath almoſt been made a Stage for the acting a bloudy Tragedy, an Altar on which had been ſacrificed innumerable precious Lives, a Prey to Roman Fury; and now behold (bleſſed be the Lord) the Scene is changed, the Curtains of Secrecy that covered the naſty vault of Popiſh Conſpirators, is happily drawn aſide; the God of our lives, by his over-awing Majeſty, hath influenced the hearts of Enemies to detect the Snare they once did endeavour to lay. Should we not then argue,

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Should I that was ſo lately in ſuch danger of loſing my precious life, now ſquander it away as a contemptible thing? Should I thus lately experiencing mercy from God, manifeſt my ſelf by wicked courſes to be a rebellious Enemy to him? Should not the thoughts of the death, danger, and miſerable calamity God hath brought me from, bring me unfeignedly to love him, and conſtantly to yield obedience to him?

Let us therefore, to prevent proceeding in ſin, reflect on the kindneſs of God: Seriouſly think how miſerable thou hadſt been without the Deliverance. Oh miſerable ſtate, had it not come! Enemies raging, if not reigning; Goſpel corrupted, if not removed; Lives endanger'd, if not deſtroyed. How had we been fleeing on Mountains, hiding in Dens, or burning in Flames, tortur'd with Racks! How had we been without Bread to eat, Houſes to lodge in, or elſe all robbed by thoſe pilfering Papiſts, if not burnt by their horrid malice, which is enough to put the whole Univerſe into miſerable Conflagrations! How ſhould we meditate how ſeaſonably Deliverance came! we, helpleſs, careleſs, and ignorant, then

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was it that his mighty arm brought a bleſſed Salvation to us. Behold, how unworthy we were of ſuch a Mercy, of ſuch a Deliverance! A ſinful rebellious people, for us to partake of ſo much favour, is the greateſt Mirrour in the world. Now can we forget this goodneſs? If we have no memories to retain Mercies, we ſoon may have no Mercies to retain in memory. Or can we ſin in the ſight of ſuch kindneſs? We ſhall never ſee ſuch a glorious Deliverance, if we ſin in the face of this. Oh let us often ſay as thoſe, Numb. 23. 22. *What hath the Lord wrought among us!* Oh what a glorious Work was this, embroider'd with Mercy, ſet forth with the ſhines of Wiſdome, and illuſtrious by the impreſſions of infinite Power! Oh forget not this Work! If we forget Deliverances, God may forget to deliver: Iſai. 17. 10, 11, *They were made deſolate for forgetting the God of their Salvation.* 'Tis known that the breaſts that afford the ſweeteſt Milk, will dry up, if not drawn; the breaſts of Mercy will be certainly dryed up, if no benefit be drawn from them by a ſerious remembrance, and faithful improving of them. Prayers and Tears are the beſt means to

obtain Mercies, and a thankful remembrance will be the beſt way to have them continued to us.

2. To prevent thy proceeding in ſin, think with thy ſelf what Promiſes and Obligations, what Pleas and Arguments you would have made to the Lord, and urged him with, to have induced him to have given ſuch a Deliverance as this. Would you not have promiſed, that if it ſhould pleaſe him to exerciſe his Power in ſaving of you, you would engage, that to the utmoſt of your power you would ſerve him? Oh what great obligations would you willingly have laid your ſelves under, to be freed from ſo dreadful a Deſtruction as you were appointed to? What obedience, ſervice, love, and reſpects, do ſinners vow to God on a Bed of ſickneſs, languiſhing to death? What would we have promis'd then, when no leſs than a whole Nation was languiſhing, and every Enjoyment ready to give up the Ghoſt? Oh what ſolemn engagements to all poſſible obedience would then have been made! Would you have promiſed theſe things, and will you not perform them? Let the readineſs of God to do it without theſe engagements, make

make you more ready to do those things than if you had engaged to do them.

Consider also what pleas thou wouldst have used with God to spare thee; think what arguments might have prevailed with him to deliver thee; and let them prevail with thee to forsake sin. Thou wouldst not have said, Lord, spare me to go on a while longer in rebellion against thee; cut me not off till I have dishonoured thy glorious Name a little more; give me my life to be a Drunkard, Swearer, Lyar, Sabbath-breaker, yet a while longer. Thou couldst never have the impudence to plead thus, thou couldst never imagine these Arguments could prevail; therefore use the considerations of Arguments which thou thinkest would prevail to curb thy heart from sin, as thou thinkest would have been proper to prevail with God to deliver thee. And what are those? Oh spare me, that I may prepare for death! Oh give me space, that I may repent of my sins, and reform! And let thy carriage be such now in part delivered, as may answer such motives as these, which would have been used with God to deliver thee.

3. Consider how thou wouldst carry to man, if receiving a thousand times smaller kindnesses from him. Oh the thanks that shall be return'd to man for a small favour! What readiness to do for man, when doing for us? Should a man but save us from perishing, how grateful, how serviceable should we become unto him? And shall kindness from sinful creatures make such impressions on our hearts, and the abounding goodness of the glorious God be disregarded? We love man loving of us, and shall we not love a loving God? We devote our selves to the service of our earthly Benefactors, and shall we be so devilish as to deny obedience to the great God, under all his benignity to us? Shall God have worse dealings from us than men? Wouldst thou not offend an earthly Friend, and wilt thou offend a heavenly Friend? Wilt make nothing of displeasing God, when he gives thee such Mercies as all the men on Earth cannot bestow upon thee? Oh let but this be considered, and surely thou canst not persist in sin.

Use 5.

See here the unconquerable ſtubbornneſs of mans heart. Oh how do our hearts ſtand out againſt God under all his dealings with us! We are ἀπειθεῖς, an *unperſwadable* generation. Oh wonderful obſtinacy, that the ſweeteſt Melody of mercy cannot charm us! Oh what hardned ſouls are in us, when the pleaſant diſtillations of ſhowers of mercy upon us, cannot ſoften us! Oh what ὀχυρώματα, ſtrong holds, have ſin, that the cords of mercy can't draw us from them! Oh how hard is it to gain a Victory over corrupted nature and accuſtomed ſins! Oh ſtrange affections that we have to ſin, that the ſtrongeſt engagements can't bring us from it! Such is the ſtubbornneſs of unchanged ſouls, that whether God walks in ways of Mercy, or paths of Judgment, they will go contrary to him. Oh the hardneſs to be lamented, that appears among us! Though the Almighty hath done thus much for us, we have not to this day been duly affected with what he hath done. We have gone on frowardly, when God hath

dealt moſt kindly by us: we go on to provoke the eyes of his glory, when he hath made ſo much of his glorious goodneſs paſs before us. Oh ſtubborn ſouls, that will not regard the melting kindneſs of God! but do as it were reſolve, whatever God doth, they will ſin againſt him. Though he ſeek reconciliation, they will follow rebellion: though he ſtrives to out-do their Rebellion with mercy, they will not lay down their Arms, but be avenged on his many mercies.

Inferences from the third Propoſition concerning the hainouſneſs of ſin after deliverance.

1. Is ſinning after deliverance ſuch hainous ſinning? Behold then what crying ſins are to be ſeen amongſt us! Have we not ſins of the greateſt magnitude, who have mercies of the higheſt nature? Are not our ſins worſe than *Sodoms*, when our mercies are abundantly more than that enjoyed? Sins in *England*, are greater than ſins in other Nations, that have not partaken of ſuch ſignal favours as we. We wonder God bears with Antichriſtian *Rome*, with forreign Idolaters; Alas, their ſins

ſins are not of that nature that ours are. Our ſins it may be are *minoris infamiæ*, of leſſer infamy, but *majoris reatus*, of greater guilt than theirs. Our ſins are double; and the more our mercies increaſe, the more abundant aggravations belong to our ſins. Are we not ſinners above all, that have favours beyond any? Our ſins that are ſmall *in abſtracto*, conſidered abſtractly, are great *in concreto*, conſidering the circumſtances of them. If ſmall ſins will not ſtartle us, here are great ſins then to amaze us. Oh let our ſins that we have committed be more before us, that ſo the ſenſe of their greatneſs may prevent our proceeding in them!

2. Hence ſee what need we have of great Repentance; an ordinary ſorrow will not anſwer our extraordinary ſins. *Graviſſima peccata graviſſimis lamentis indigent.* Greateſt provocations call for greateſt lamentations. Oh what tears and lamentations can be great enough for our horrid ſins? What ſighs can be deep enough for a Nation ſo deeply involved in ſin? Should not our mourning be as in the mourning of *Hadadrimmon*, in the Valley of *Megiddon*, every family apart, every perſon apart? Should not *Ninive*

be our preſident? Should not our *England* become a Bokim, and our *Iſland* be overflown with tears? Oh what floods of tears is there need of, to waſh away our abominable pollutions! Oh what wailing and weeping ſhould be in a Nation living and wallowing in ſuch iniquities? *Aut pœnitendum vel pereundum.* Repentance onely can prevent our ruine; Repentance onely can make juſtice to retreat; Repentance onely can deliver us now delivered: But where ſhall we finde it? Where are the weeping eyes, the mourning hearts? Oh that repentance might appear among us, leſt judgments appear againſt us! Oh that we could lay our ſelves down at the feet of mercy by humiliation, that we may not be laid down in a dreadful deſolation, by the hands of juſtice! Oh that a hearty repentance might prevent our haſtening ruine! Oh that we might lie in breathing ſweats of Godly ſorrow, that we may not lie ſweltring in our blood! Our ſins reach up to Heaven, let our ſorrow reach to heart. Oh that each part of unfeigned repentance might be really acted by us!

Let us make a ſtrict inquiry into our ſins, commune with our hearts; let us

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go the Circuit of our hearts and lives, and see the abominable sins to be condemned there. Let us read the Book of Conscience, and see what sins we there stand indicted for. As Letters wrote with the juice of Oranges, are not to be read but by the fire; Thus some have their sins written, and will not read them now; but shall at last read them by the fire of Hell. *Lam.*3.40. *Let us search and try our ways.* Oh we are senseless of our sins; but *æger non sentiens periculosius laborat*; a senseless sick man is most in danger. Oh open your eyes then, and see what disorders in heart, what wickedness in life! refuse not a sight of thy sins now; one day God will set them before thy eyes.

Disown not the Charges that are against thee, without reason. Let us no longer sew Fig-leaves on our sins. The impartial Judge of Heaven and Earth knows our crimes. Let us therefore return and say, Father I have sinned. Thus did those, *Lam.* 5. 16. *Wo be to us, we have sinned.* *David* yeilded the case to *Nathan*, *I am the man:* maist thou not justly say, I am the man that have been nothing the better for deliverance; I am the man

or woman have gone on in Pride, Sensuality, without repentance, reformation? Defend not thy sins by excuses, but own them; be convinced without further demur, and condemn thy self as a guilty malefactor. Then let us pour out our tears, and open the Flood-gates of Godly sorrow; and if we would escape, let us be like those, Ezek. 7. 16. *Who were like Doves in the Valleys, mourning every one for their own iniquity.* Oh that our proud hearts might yeild to this work! Our dry eyes be filled with tears. Let us fill Gods bottle with our tears! What is weeping good for, but to testifie our sorrow for sin? it cannot recover a dying friend, it may a dying Nation: it cannot stop the course of death, it may the coming of judgments. Open then the windows of Heaven, and break up the deeps, and let us make us a hearty weeping, as may prevent the heavy judgments our great sins are calling for.

Then let us make a holy resolution, in the strength of the Almighty, to cease from our sins. Say as holy *Job*, Job 34. 32. *If I have done evil I will, do it no more.* With holy indignation reject thy former villanies. Oh let our souls be raised

raiſed to a deſerved hatred of theſe great iniquities, and let nothing content us, but the utter ruine of our ruining ſins. Let us not be diſmai'd at the difficulty attending that bleſſed work: 'Tis hard to deſtroy ſin, but will it not be harder to be damned for it? If it be hard to bear the launching of thoſe ranker'd wounds, what will it be to bear the ſmart of the envenomed arrows of divine juſtice for ever? Know alſo, thou may'ſt do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens thee; then carry thy ſins with the ſolemnity of penitential tears, to their eternal funeral. And unleſs this reformaon ſhall attend thy repentance, thou repenteſt with an abſurd contradiction. *Optima pœnitentia eſt nova vita:* The beſt repentance is a new life. This is the repentance our hainous ſins require; and all this is to be done in a more than ordinary way, becauſe of the greatneſs of our ſins.

3. If ſins after deliverance are ſo great, hence ſee how near judgments may be unto us, becauſe the meaſure of our iniquities will be ſo ſuddenly filled. The patience of Heaven will ſoon be worn out with theſe daring provocations. As we

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are heaping up Sin, the Almighty is heaping up Wrath; and the greater ſins, the ſooner the treaſures of wrath will be full. The more fuel we bring, the ſooner the fire will be kindled to conſume us. The Lord in his mercy is waiting to be gracious, backward to judgment; but ſuch iniquities will ſoon waſte his patience, and provoke his wrath.

We read, *Gen.* 15. 16. that the Lord delayed puniſhment, becauſe the *iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.* The meaſure of ſin and wrath are often filling many years; and according as ſins are aggravated, judgments approach faſter or ſlower. Thus *Joel* 3. 13. God calls for *Sickles to be put in, becauſe the harveſt was ripe, the preſſes were full, and the fats did overflow.* God will ſuffer ſinners to ſtand till they are come to their full ſtature in ſin, and then he cuts them down, and makes an end of them. Thus Chriſt ſpeaks to the Scribes and Phariſees, *Mat.* 23. 32. *Fill ye up the meaſure of your Fathers. i. e.* Ye will be filling up the meaſure of their ſins, till the Lord comes and meaſures out judgment to you, according to the meaſure of your ſins. Oh then what cauſe have we to fear, leſt the Vials of wrath

wrath ſhould ſuddenly be poured out upon us! Is not the harveſt of ſin almoſt ripe? or will not theſe ſhowers of mercy ſuddenly ripen it? And then the ſickle muſt be put in; a bloody enemy let in among us, that ſhall cut us down as the reapers do the corn. Oh let us dread the approaches of vengeance under the increaſes of ſin and wickedneſs! The meaſures of wrath have been long a filling; the iniquities of our fathers are lay'd up for us, and may be rewarded on our heads when the meaſure is full. We ripen apace for judgments now; deſtruction may be at the door ere we know.

Inferences from the fourth and fifth Propoſitions concerning the deſtructive nature of Sinning after deliverance.

Uſe 1.

May deſtruction come after deliverance? Then hence we may learn, that preſent impunity can be no evidence of our future ſafety. Mercies are not ſo inſeparably entail'd upon us, that juſtice cannot deprive us of them. Preſent proſperity may have a mournful ending in diſmal adverſity.

adverſity. National, as perſonal ſalvation from preſent dangers, may end in deſtruction. The wings of our feathery confidence had need be clipt, when we fondly preſume the Almighty to be ever bound to deliver ſuch a people as we, becauſe he hath once more graciouſly done it. 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. God reſerves the unjuſt to judgment. The bird that eſcapes the fowlers net for once, may be afterwards caught: we that are wonderfully preſerved from the ſnares of helliſh Plotters, may at laſt be made a prey, if we grow no more watchful. Our cloudy Heavens threaten new ſtorms. The world is very full of great and unexpected mutations: The turnings of the wheels of Providence are very ſwift and various. We may now as ſuddenly be deſtroy'd, as we have often been delivered. *Jud.* 5. *After delivered, God deſtroyed thoſe that believed not.* The ſhip that evades the dangers of the Sea more than once, may be ſwallowed up in its Sands, or ſhattered by its Rocks at laſt.

The reprieved malefactor may juſtly expect his deſerved execution, after a little ſpace afforded for preparation. And in truth, the relief our offended God hath given

given us, ſeems more like a Reprieve, than a Deliverance; and cauſe we have moſt ſeriouſly to fear, that ere long we ſhall experience that Juſtice can deſtroy, as Mercy can deliver. Our impunity is not from Gods impotency, but patience; and that may ſoon be expir'd. We have cauſe to dread that awakening word, Joſh. 24. 20. *If ye forſake the Lord, then will he turn and do you hurt, after all the good he hath done you.* Our not returning under good, will make him turn to do us harm. Proceeding in ſin will interrupt the courſe of mercies, and introduce ſucceſſions of judgments. You may be ſurpriſed with ſudden miſeries, in the midſt of your feigned ſafety. God will not always draw with cords of love. *Hoſ.* 11. 3. 4, 5. *I drew them with cords of a man, with bonds of love*; that is, I dealt with them in the moſt gracious manners, ſtriving to draw their rebellious hearts into ſubjection; but ſince I cannot prevail, *v.* 5 *They ſhall not go down to* Egypt, *they ſhall have no ſhelter there, but the Aſſyrian ſhall be their King, and the ſword ſhall abide in their cities, and devour his branches.* Thus may the dealings of God be changed, and cords of love be

be turned to chaſtiſing rods, to laſh the backs of ſtubborn fools. We cannot enſure the continuance of mercies, but by our compliance with the deſigns of God by them. That which was ſpoken to *Ephraim*, may fall upon us, *Hoſ.* 9.11. *As for Ephraim, his glory ſhall flee away like a bird.* We imagine we have mercies ſure as a bird in the cage: but as the door being opened the bird flies away, ſo mercies will take their wings, and be gone from a ſinful people. Truſt not then to your preſent freedom, you may be enſlaved; flatter not your ſelves in hopes of perpetual deliverance, deſtruction may come at laſt.

3. Will this perſiſtence in ſin haſten ſuch certain and miſerable ruine! Then ſee what reaſon there is to ſhake off our pleaſing but hurtful ſecurity, admitting ſome fearful thoughts, and affecting our hearts with apprehenſions of our eminent danger. Unwilling we are to admit of ſuch Truths near our decoying hearts, which may affect us with fear or grief: But 'tis far from the nature of wiſdom to flatter our ſelves into ruine; or to fancy our ſelves ſecure in a glorious Paradiſe, till we be miſerable in a deſolate wilderneſs.

Three

Three things, says *Luther*, will undo a Nation; Oblivion of Mercies, Politick contrivances, and Carnal Security. Well will it be, if these prove not our ruine at last.

Oh what a fearless Age do we live in? we sleep on pillows stuft with the fire of divine vengeance: We cry, Peace, Peace, and destruction is coming. How do we stupifie our Senses, sear our Consciences, lock up our Understandings, to keep out all fears in the midst of most dreadful dangers? What stupifying Opiums hath the Devil perswaded us to swallow, that makes us so mindless of approaching miseries? How do we fortifie our selves with most fond presumptions against the threats of vengeance denounc'd from Heaven? Can fancyed safety deliver our Nation from Enemies, when we have nothing else to secure us? Can empty boastings of conceited ability to defend our selves, prevent the assaults of Enemies, or deliver our Land from the ruine designed? Will security in sin be sufficient guard to preserve us from all Conspiracies? can neither God nor man do us any harm, whilst we imagine our selves out of danger? *Oh nos miserrimos!* Oh miserable *England!*

England! how do we ſurfeit with mercies, and wax ſick with the kindneſs of Heaven, and yet ſay, It ſhall be well with us? How do we wound our ſelves, when the Lord is healing; and deſtroy our ſelves, when the Lord is delivering, and yet ſay, The Lord will go on to deliver? What Proſperity do we promiſe our ſelves, whilſt God is threatning our ruine? What *Halcyon*-days do we vainly expect, though Miſeries are ready to ſeize us? Oh the dreadful Dooms that are threatned to ſo ſtupid a people in the Word of the Lord! Oh the ſad Calamities have come upon a people in this condition!

Is not this the poſture our Enemies ſo greatly deſire to finde us in? What is their work, but to lull us aſleep, and then to be butchering of us? What is the great contrivance at this day of the Papiſts, and ſuch as affect them, but to ſuppreſs our fears by cheating devices? knowing our deepeſt ſecurity will be their greateſt advantage. They know, our Throats will lye open to be cut by their cruel hands, when once we have emptied our hearts of ſollicitous thoughts of deſtruction. Hence, hence it is, inſtruments

are

are active to inform us deceitfully, that we are ſufficiently provided againſt them: for this they inſtruct theirs and the Devils Martyrs to obtrude on the world the higheſt Proteſtations of Innocency: For this they ſtrain their throats to ſwallow renouncing Oaths, which they will as certainly keep as ever they intended, which I fear was not at all. Hence they force themſelves to a Pariſh-Church, that we may certainly think they cannot belong to the *Romiſh* Mother; and that we may fancy, they cannot go thence to contrive our miſerable ruine. Oh then if this be their plot, how have they got us by it? How do we pleaſe our enemies, and promote their deſigns, by our ſinful Security? But ſhall we not fear the Hammer and Nail will cleave our Pates, when *Siſera*-like we are droll'd into ſleep with a Lordly Diſh of Butter and Honey? You may certainly believe this ſtupifying *Opium* will be like the poyſon of Aſps at laſt.

Is not this the Poſture moſt have been in, when Judgments came upon them? What was there but careleſs and ſenſeleſs doings, when that dreadful Deluge ſurpriz'd the world of old? *Mat.*24.37, 38.

How

How unexpected was the ruine of *Sodome* and *Gomorrha?* How incredulous were the Jews of their ſad Captivities, and of their utter Deſolation at laſt? Obſerve we but the frame of perſons when Judgments have been rained from Heaven upon them, and we ſhall finde they were fearleſs of any ſtorms, and conceitedly ſecure from any miſeries. When the Maſſacre broke forth in *Paris*, the cruel butchering was acted in *Ireland*, the ruining Perſecutions and Diſtreſſes fell upon *Germany*, they were all involv'd in Lethargical Diſtempers, beſotted with fatal Security. This is the time the beaſts of prey have ever gone out to glut themſelves with fatning blood. This hath been the ſeaſon ever ſelected to manage the overthrow of Kingdoms. Yet examples do not warn us, but we fooliſhly ſeem reſolv'd to gratifie our enemies with a ſuitable ſeaſon to ruine us. Is not this the poſture that God hath ſeverely threatned in his Word, to which he will ever be faithful? Iſai. 22. 13, 14. *In that day the Lord of Hoſts called to mourning and weeping, and behold joy and gladneſs: and it was revealed in my ears ---Surely this Iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till you die.*

die. Nothing urges Juſtice more to confound a people with floods of Vengeance, than *Epicurean* ſtupidity under awakening Alarums. Hath not the Lord threatned, Prov. 29. 1. *He that being often reproved, and ſtill hardens his neck, ſhall be deſtroyed ſuddenly, and that without remedy?* Why then do we flatter our ſelves, and cry Peace, peace? Shall we ſay as thoſe? Zeph. 1. 12. *The Lord will do neither good nor evil.* Will not God then ſay, as v. 13. *Therefore your goods ſhall become a booty, and your houſes a deſolation?* Whatever may be the foundation our Security is builded upon, ſo long as provoking Sins are heaping up Wrath, Security doth but haſten our Miſery. 'Tis poſſible we are incredulous that Judgments can ever deſtroy a People renowned in Profeſſion as we; but ſince our Profeſſion is but as *Samuel*'s mantle, under which are ſhrouded moſt deviliſh ſins, or as a carpet caſt over the mouth of Hell, it can never be a ſhelter for us, but ſtirs up the Lord to vengeance. Outſide-Holineſs and mocking Formality renders our condition the worſe. *Micah* 3. 11, 12. They leaned upon God in ways of ſin, *and ſaid, Is not the Lord among us?* do we not profeſs him,

and

and worſhip him? *Therefore ſhall Zion for your ſakes be plowed as a field, and* Jeruſalem *ſhall become heaps, and the mountains of the Houſe of the Lord, as the high places of the forreſt.* The Ark of the Lord could not ſave the Iſraelites ſinning; *Zion* will be no ſhelter for Hypocrites. 'Tis in vain to flatter our ſelves with conceits of ſafety in an outward ſhew of Godlineſs; that hay and ſtraw can be no fence from the ruining flames of Divine Vengeance.

Awake then from brutiſh ſecurity, and fall to work to prevent the threatned ruine, by repentance and amendment. Fancy not your ſelves beyond the reach of judgments, but tremble in your ſelves, that you may have reſt in the day of trouble. Make the Almighty your friend, that he may not be a terrour in the day of Evil. Be afraid of all his judgments, *For if you will not learn to fear that great and dreadful Name, the Lord thy God, then will he make thy plagues wonderful*, Deut. 28. 38. Is not deſtruction coming after deliverance? Are not dreadful days approaching to us? Conſider theſe few particulars following, and you will ſee what cauſe we have to ſhake off ſecurity, and prepare

prepare our ſelves to meet the Lord in ways of judgments, who have ſo long enjoy'd the ſhines of mercy.

1. May we not juſtly fear our ungrateful carriage towards God, will haſten his formidable departure from us? Unkindneſs ſhown to friends coming to us, will certainly diſcourage them from abiding with us. The happineſs of a Nation conſiſts above all, in the fruition of the favourable preſence of God; and if by a regardleſs carriage, or diſpleaſing behavior, we provoke him to depart, our ſudden ruine will be the conſequence of his deſerting of us. *Hoſ. 9. 12. Wo alſo to them when I depart from them.* There is that abſolute neceſſity of the preſence of the Lord with a people, to conduct them by his Counſel, to protect them by his Power, to ſucceed them by his bleſſing in uſe of ſaving means, to deliver them in unconquerable dangers, that if he withdraws it from them, none of theſe things can be done by another hand. Hence the Lord, unwilling to ruine *Jeruſalem*, with bowels of compaſſion cries out, *Jer. 6. 8. Be inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee, and thy land becomes deſolate and not inhabited.* The ſoul of a man is the

vivifick principle, on the ſeparation of which from the body, there enſues a death; all ſtrength, counſel, beauty, leaves the body. Thus when the Lord departs, the ſoul of a Nation is gone, and then the Nation is only a mouldring heap, and as a liveleſs carcaſs. We certainly looſe all good, when the preſence of God is withdrawn from us. If we by our ſins make the Almighty go away, he for our ſins will take away all kinde of Mercies from us. Deut.3.1.17. *I will forſake them.* The regardleſs Atheiſts of our age will ſay, Let him go, and what then? *Oh*, ſays the Lord, *Then ſhall ye be devoured, and many evils and troubles ſhall come upon you; ſo that they ſhall ſay in that day, Are not theſe evils come upon us, becauſe the Lord is not amongſt us?*

Now may we not fear God will depart from a people that behave themſelves ſo unkindly as we at this day? We ſlight his preſence, abuſe his kindneſs; can we think to be bleſt with his preſence long? We read, Hoſ. 8. 3. *Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good.* The Hebr. is only, טוב זנח *repulit à ſe bonum*, i. e. ἀυργέτην, *beneficium*, or ὡπὸ τὸ ἀγαθὸν, *Præter quem non eſt bonum.* So *Rivet*, *Grotius*, and others: that

that is, *Israel* hath driven from it God the onely good, hath made its kind Benefactor go away. Oh have we not done thus? have we not been driving God away from us; as weary of his Ordinances, tired with Gospel-proffers, nauseating Mercies, and despising Deliverances? How can we think God can walk with us any longer, when we walk so frowardly and contrary to him? *Amos* 3.3. *How can two walk together, unless they be agreed?* thereby God shews them how impossible it was for him to continue in ways of mercy to them, since they refused to walk with him in ways of duty; which is the sweet harmony God expected from them: says the Lord, You would have me to walk with you, and bless you, yet ye depart from me, and blaspheme my Name. How can I longer walk with you? Thus the Lord threatens a people, *Lev.* 26.21. *If ye walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you.* v. 24. *I will bring seven times more Plagues upon you, according to your sins.* Oh how perversely have we walked! How contrary is Disobedience to Deliverance, Sinning to Salvation, Cursing to Blessing! and may not God justly leave us

to ruine, and ſuffer our deſtruction, who deal thus unanſwerably with him?

2. May we not juſtly fear that our provoked God in juſtice will ſet the wicked over us, who have deſpiſed his righteous and bleſſed Government? *Auguſt.* ſays, God ſets up wicked oppreſſors, *cum judicat res humanas talibus dignas dominis; when he judges a people meriting ſuch maſters.* When Religion is counted an intolerable yoak, under a Government that decrees the obſervance of it, we may with terrour expect a yoak to be laid upon our necks that ſhall be ſo heavy, that we ſhall ſee our unſpeakable folly in accounting the ſervice of God a ſlavery to him. Have we not cauſe to fear that dreadful word? *Deut.* 28.47, 48. *Becauſe thou ſervedſt not the Lord thy God with joyfulneſs and gladneſs of heart in the abundance of all things: Therefore ſhalt thou ſerve thine enemies which the Lord ſhall ſend againſt thee, in hunger, and thirſt, and nakedneſs, and in want of all things; and they ſhall put a yoak upon thy neck, until they have deſtroyed thee.* Our wanton ſpirits under ſometimes-a-proſperous Rule, may be humbled by the ſeverities of either forreign Princes prevailing

or home-enemies raigning. God punishing the iniquity of a people, is said, *Hos.* 13. 11. *To give them a king in his wrath.* When God sets the wicked over a people, 'tis a manifest indication of his anger. God often sets the worst of Governours over the worst of people. As a holy man pleading with God about one *Phocas* made an Emperour, *Cur Domine Phocam Imperatorem constituisti? responsum datum accepit, Quia non inveni pejorem. Why Lord hast thou made Phocas an Emperour? he was answered, Because I could not find a worse.*

May not our hearts then dread the fatal effects of removing our present King? (whom God preserve.) Should God in anger do it, what bloody confusion may follow in this nation? and will not our sins in the abundance of mercies, make him destroy both us and our King? *Prov.* 28. 2. *For the transgression of a Land, many are the Princes thereof*: that is, the continuance of Kings on this account is shortned, and for the punishment of their villanies the lives of their Kings are abbreviated, and one is set up after another; which great mutations are often attended with great confusions, and innumerable calamities.

3. May we not justly fear, the Lord may suspend his divine influence from the Councels of this Nation, that since we have little regarded what he hath done for us, the ablest Advisers, the most politick Counsellours, may be disabled from doing those things which may be profitable for us? How often have the Councellours of a Nation deserted by God, been unprosperous in their enterprises and undertakings for a people? Notwithstanding the care our *vigilant Soveraign* hath taken or may take to suppress the growing power of Popery by his Royal Proclamations; and although the hearts of our *Parliament* may be filled with sincerest intentions, to act for the advantage of the Nation, yet they may fail in the means, and be disappointed of the end, if God should desist from concurring with them.

What if their *Counsels* shall not have acceptance? What if their advice may seem unsafe, and others must needs be chosen? Will not the Enemies of our Nation be working all this while? Will not our Foes be contriving and hastening our ruine, ere we have counsel to prevent it? Would not this be a heavy judg-

Judgment? And may not this be feared by us, who have seen how hard it is to give acceptable counsel in these difficult and dangerous times?

What if the Lord should do to us, as to the Counsellors of a people of old, Isai. 19. 14. *He mingled a spirit of perverseness in the midst of them:* Hence they became as *a drunken man that staggereth in his vomit.* They staggered about, were always unfixed, ever unstable, but reeled this way and that way, not knowing what to do, or where to go. Should this *Spirit of division* be mingled with ours, what shall we finde but the breach made wider, the distress made greater? *Private animosities* would be the destruction of *publick advantages*: The Blessing that hath been promised to the godly, hath been wanting to Councellors in our age, Psal. 1. 3. *Whatsoever he doth shall prosper.* But hath not a miscarrying Womb, and *dry Breasts*, been the Curse of the Lord upon us?

What if the Lord should suffer them to mistake the means of our recovery, or fall short in what they do? Sometimes it hath been known that Governours have been *too sparing to the wicked*, to

their own ruine. The *King of Israel* lost his life, for sparing *Benhadad* that should have died, 1 Kings 20. 41. *Thus saith the Lord, Because thou hast let go out of thine hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.* It seems *Ahab* had too great a kindness for *Benhadad*, who deserved to dye, being an implacable enemy to them: And are there not such enemies to be destroy'd at this day? He also held by *Tyranny* places belonging to the *Israelites*, and therefore deserved death: And are there not those who are seeking to possess what belongs unto us, that ought to be cut off for their malicious enterprizes? He was also one that God did manifest his displeasure against, by destroying 100000 Footmen of them, whereby he might understand Gods displeasure against him. Now for him to spare this enemy, to intreat so honourably this publick Adversary, when given into his hands, brought him under this threatning. Should our enemies be even spared like him, should we not suffer after this manner? And will not this be a bad exchange, to give our lives for theirs? Will this be a worthy deed, *to*

spare

ſpare a thief from the gallows to cut our throats? See 1 *Sam.* 14. 21, 23. There is little truſting ſuch enemies, whatever pretences they make. *Judæo baptizato, & lupo domeſtico, non eſt credendum. We muſt not truſt a baptized Jew, being an inward enemy to a Chriſtian; nor a houſe-wolf*, that will ſtill make murder among the ſheep.

Sometimes in the world it hath been known, that as men have been too ſparing to the wicked, ſo *too cruel to the godly.* The rod hath been laid on the wrong back, as the Poet ſaid,

Dat veniam corvis, vexat cenſura columbas. The innocent Doves are cenſur'd, whilſt the ravenous Crows are pardoned. The *Chriſtians* in former days have been cloath'd with *Bears*-skins, and then *baited.* Some perſons are miſrepreſented, and then more ſeverely reprehended than thoſe a thouſand times more guilty. We read in Scripture how *Ahaſuerus*, that mighty Prince, was brought to decree the ruine of the *Jews*, by the aſperſions *Haman* caſt upon them, as if they were a people *not fit to live*, and that it was not for the Kings profit to ſuffer them; and by this means this *innocent people* had utterly been

deſtroyed, had not a wonderful Providence prevented. Hence ſometimes it hath been experienced, that a poor afflicted people have born the puniſhments deſigned for and deſerved by others, only from the miſpriſions of prejudiced perſons. Should it then be ever thus with us, how ſoon would our ruine come upon us? How would the hands of enemies be ſtrengthened, and the Nation diſabled from helping it ſelf?

4. May we not juſtly fear our enemies have now ſet forward, by their doubled diligence, that deſigne which was ſet back by the diſcovery of their accurſed Plot? Our enemies may be like the Devil, *qui ſurgit armis quibus dejicitur*, riſes by the weapons by which he is caſt down: So theſe politick Wretches may improve the diſcovery of their deſigns, to make for the advancing of them, by laying their Plots more cunningly. We have often heard of repulſed Armies gaining force, and at laſt become triumphing Conquerours. Our enemies may yet be rallying upon us, and that with a more invincible fury. The Fowler often removes his ſnares, underſtanding the birds perception of it; our enemies may change

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or remove their ſnares, and yet be as nea to ſlay and undo us as before. And when we are moſt ſecure from it, we are neareſt to it. The dreadful battle was againſt *Gibeah*, when *he knew not ſuch an evil was near him*, Judg. 20. 34. Thoſe Serpents will not dye becauſe their tails are cut off. Thoſe grand Politicians can contrive more ways than one. 'Tis poſſible their fainting hearts have had ſome Cordials from *Rome* to revive them. *France* can help them at a dead lift: and their Ghoſtly Father will prevent the ruine of his curſed brats, if all he can do can ruine us. May we not fear things are brought to be *ſtatu quo*, as they were before, or rather worſe, if that be poſſible? I fear every gap is not yet ſtopt, whereby our enemies may poſſibly invade us. I think it may be feared our enemies are not yet ſo much impaired, but that they are able to recover their loſs of ſome Arms they had to ſpare, and ſome men they will not miſs amongſt their thouſands. Do they not cry in the ſtoutneſs of their hearts and pride of ſpirit, as *Iſa.* 9. 10. *The bricks are fallen down, we will build with ſtones; the ſycomores are cut down, we will build with cedars?* We have been

too remiſs this once, but now we will be more invincible. The water caſt upon their fire, may make it burn the more fiercely, and vexatious diſappointments will make them more diligent.

5. May we not juſtly fear the relief that we have, may be no other than a faint chearing before a miſerable death? How often do we ſee men labouring under deadly diſeaſes, revive a little, and give up the Ghoſt? How often do we know a *whiſt calm*, before a raging ſtorm? A people may get a little heart immediately before their ruine. 2 *Kings* 17. 4. compared with *Hoſ.* 1. 8. When *Lo-ammi* was born, the ten tribes that before were diſpirited, and by preſents did homage to the King of *Aſſyria* year by year, begin to be jolly, and hope to caſt off the yoak of bondage, and bring preſents no longer; but joyned in confederacy with *Egypt*, which was immediately before their rejection. God begins to ſave with a little eſcape, but it may be but a *little lightning* before death. The *Dolphin* ſports much before a ſtorm. Men in jolly and fearleſs condition, is a dreadful preſage of a ruining ſtorm. So true

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it is in *maximâ fortunâ minima licentia*. In the greateſt proſperity, we are not allowed the leaſt ſinful liberty. God threatning to bring down judgments upon *Iſrael*, ſays, *he will feed him as a lamb in a large place*, Hoſ. 4. 16. *To enlarge a peoples bounds*, is in Scripture taken to *free them from troubles*; ſo God deſigning great diſtreſs, would a while free them from troubles. 'Tis a metaphor taken from *Butchers*, who about to ſlay their Cattle, firſt put them into large paſtures to fatten them; ſo God about to deſtroy a people, often gives them a freedome from diſtreſs, and leaves them to fill up apace the meaſures of their ſins, and then brings them out to ſlaughter: Hence *Merc.* on the place; *Nunc Iſraelitas copiosè paſcet, ut mox ſaginati hoſtibus dedantur trucidandi.* He feeds the *Iſralites* moſt plentifully with mercies, that being fatted up, they may become a prey to their butchering enemies. Oh how faſt do we fatten! How ſoon ſhall we be ready to be ſacrifices to our enemies?

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they become but *examples* and *patterns* of our own deſtruction. Luke 13. 3. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall likewiſe periſh.* The Sword of Juſtice is not ſo blunted by wounding others, but it can wound the hairy ſcalp of every one that goes on in ſin. The Arrows of Divine Vengeance are not yet ſpent, there may be many in reſerve to pierce our obſtinate, hardened hearts. God is *the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever*; the ſame to love, protect and ſecure his obſequious people; the ſame to ruine and deſtroy rebellious ſinners. Ezek. 20. 36. *Like as I have pleaded with your Fathers, ſo will I plead with you.* The puniſhments of ſin other Nations have experienced, may at laſt be inflicted on us. The Vengeance of God on others, is a ſigne to us, Jer. 7. 12-14. *Go ye now to my place which was in* Shiloh, *and ſee what I did to it, for the wickedneſs of my people* Iſrael; *and now becauſe ye have done all theſe works, ſaith the Lord, therefore will I do ſo to this houſe*, &c. May not the dealings of God with others, prognoſticate his dealings with us? May not the ſore Deſolations in *Germany*, the diſtreſſes of Proteſtants in *France*, the ruines of the Churches we read of in *John*'s *Revelations*,

tions, cauſe us to fear we at laſt ſhall experience the ſame Miſeries, and drink of the ſame cup of Aſtoniſhment that hath been given to them? 2 Pet. 2. 5, 6. *If God ſpared not the old world, ſhalt thou eſcape his judgment?* What have we more to ſecure us? Why ſhould we not be made as *Sodome* by judgments, that parallel it in ſins? Let us take the caution God gave to *Iſrael*, Deut. 24. 9. *Remember what the Lord thy God did unto* Miriam *by the way, when he brought thee from* Egypt. Minde what God hath been doing to other Nations. The *Inſcription* on *Senacherib*'s Statue may be written on all ruined Nations, Εἰς ἐμὲ, ὁρῶν δυσεβὴς ἴσω. *Beholding me, learn to be godly.* But eſpecially when diſtreſſes fall on a people near us, we are greatly to regard them. The Proteſtants in *France* are already involv'd in unſpeakable trouble, and as the Poet ſaid,

--Tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet.
Thou art greatly concerned when thy Neighbours houſe is in flames. The Cup paſſes from one to another.

7. To conclude, Although we may have an eſcape from final Ruine, and *glorious Times* may ſucceed our *unhappy days*,

days, may we not juſtly fear, that our *Mercies* may be *uſhered in* with a great deal of Miſery, and that a black Storm will precede our glorious Sunſhine? The approaches of Mercies may be attended with amazing Terrour. Great diſtreſſes may juſtly be expected, before our great Deliverance.

The ſhorter the time of enemies raigning is, the greater will be their rage. A *Cloud* uſhered in the preſence of God to the *Tabernacle*; Chriſts coming to redeem his people, appears in a cloud. The darkeſt hour is a little before the dawning of the glorious day. The ſoreſt conflicts *Iſrael* had, was on their entrance into their bleſſed and promiſed *Canaan*. Mercies of greateſt excellencies, have proportioned difficulties. *Joſephs* pearled Crown, & Chains of honour, had anſwerable links of trouble. We have juſt cauſe from Gods promiſes to expect ſome glorious days, but certainly a gloomy day will be firſt. The earth will be ſhaken when *Babylon* ſhall fall. Before we can be happy, the filth of *England* muſt be *waſhed away with the ſpirit of judgment and burning*. We may be dealt with as is ſpoken of the *Jews*, Zech. 13.8,9 *Two parts*

may

may be cut off, and the third refined. I may confidently assert, God will bring more glorious days than yet the world enjoyed; but as *Balaam* said, *Alas, who shall live when the Lord does this? Numb.* 24. 24. Thou or I may be cut off, with millions more; and seeing this time is at hand, be not secure. The onely way to secure any future deliverance, is by improving this. The way to have future salvation, is to make use of this you enjoy, to mortifie sins. *For the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and to those that turn from iniquity in* Jacob, *Isa.* 59. 20. So then let us no longer abuse the patience of God; but since he is an indulgent Father, let us become obedient Children; that so we may hope, that he that hath delivered, and can deliver, will still be continuing deliverances to us.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PREFACE. Page 6. line 14. for *health* read *hearts*.

BOOK. Page 21. line *ult.* read ὀλιμανῆσαι. p. 22. l. 10. r. *multiplicavi*. p. 47. l. 24. for *willing*, r. *unwilling*. p. 59. note, that at the twelfth line begins a fourth head. p. 73. note, l. 5. begins a second head. p. 90. note, l. 13. begins a fourth head. p. 100. l. 26. for *also*, r. *able*. p. 103. l. 3. for *usurped*, r. *envied*.

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